A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF THE LITERARY REPRESENTATION OF MARRIAGE IN NESHANI ANDREAS' *THE PURPLE VIOLET OF OSHAANTU* AND VALERIE TAGWIRA'S *THE UNCERTAINTY OF HOPE*

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ABSTRACT

This study analysed the representations of the marriage institution in Neshani Andreas' *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* (2001) and Valerie Tagwira's *The Uncertainly of Hope* (2006) through the explications of Masculinity Theories and Nego-Feminism. Marriage is a topical and contentious issue in both social and legal spheres of life. Marriage is a sacred institution that must be well prepared for as failure to plan before entering the union is planning to fail after entering the union. Every marital relationship is bound either to succeed or fail depending on the attitudes and inputs of the spouses involved. The study examined how the literary texts portray the complex and intricate qualities of marriage. The study's use of Masculinity Theories and Nego-Feminism to analyse the texts necessitated the incorporation and analysis of numerous issues such as marriage failure, marital in/stability, violence and abuse (specifically from male partners) and quality, functional marriages, and causes of marital dissatisfaction and marital breakdown in the texts. The study used a desk-top qualitative research and employed content analysis in the interpretation and analysis of the selected novels. The study observed that by analysing *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* (2001) and *The Uncertainty of Hope* (2006) as compeers, served as living testimonies to some rich narratives, as the novels provide a coherent and common understanding of the growing complexity of marriage and family. *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* (2001) and *The Uncertainty of Hope* manifest marital relationship issues in relation to society. The study findings revealed that the common understanding of marriage is a ubiquitous institution as it encompasses all cultures, races, ethnic group or religious formation. Moreover, the study further found that the common causes of marital dissatisfaction and marital breakdown were extra-marital affairs, abusive husbands, alcohol abuse, and in-laws' interference among others. Extra-marital affairs were more prevalent amongst married men than married women. The study noted that from the evidence from a number of existing literary perspectives on marriage, it seems that for some, marriage turns out to be a loveless entrapment while for others, marriage is a one miserable long-life experience. The study also observed that there are sometimes satisfaction, stability and functional marriages. The study recommends that for the future, studies be carried out on the possibility of female abusive partners within marital relationships.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my late father, Johannes Nampungu Shipahu and my mother Kristina Mweshipopya Shipahu for having raised me up properly, transforming me into a formidable citizen and to the former late Cuban president and Comandante, En Jefe Fidel Alejandro Castro Ruz, my role model.

DECLARATION

I, Bernard Shipahu, hereby declare that this study is a true reflection of my own research, and that this work, or part thereof has not been submitted for a degree in any institution of higher education.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the study by providing the background of the study, statement of the problem, and the objectives of the study. The significance of the study is also foregrounded, limitations as well as delimitations of the study, then eventually the organisation of the study.

1.2 Background of the study

"For some, marriage turns out to be a loveless entrapment. While for others, marriage is a one miserable long-life experience" (Andreas, 2001, p. 4). "But she stayed for the sake of her children and because marriage was not something that one could just walk away from. Once you get in, you stay … no matter how hard it gets. Always remember that a woman cannot raise a good family without a man by her side…" (Tagwira, 2006, p. 7). Taking cue from the above quotations, this study critically explored the ambivalent and paradoxical presentation of marriage in the selected novels, namely *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* (2001*)* by Andreas and *The Uncertainty of Hope* (2006) by Tagwira set in Namibia and Zimbabwe respectively. This study explored the theme of marriage using the selected African literary texts.

At first glance, *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* (2001) has been analysed by many African critics such as Katjavivi (2002), Ogbeide (2013), and Okeke (2015). These scholars have explored critical issues in marriage failure in African fiction, for example; abusive husbands, infidelity, dysfunctional marriages and divorce among others. However, there is another perspective, which has received little attention, which is the possibility of prototypical and archetypical marriages where marital satisfaction despite some challenges seem to be found. Those who have looked at the critical issues of marriage have mainly focused only on a one dimensional perspective. In this respect, it becomes evident that, much uncertainty still exists about the presentation of a holistic and balanced appreciation marital relationships in the African body of literature. Gilligan (1982) and Omage (2013) highlight for example, concepts such as non-marital children, cohabitation, advanced ages at first marriage, higher rates of divorce and separation. However, far too little attention has been paid to marriage in the literary works as possible sites for functionality, quality

and stability. Hence, it may be evident that this is an almost one-sided view, which is the dysfunctional perspective of marriage without considering the presentation of what authors have presented as exemplary marriages, even in the midst of others who may see it as a loveless entrapment.

Turning to *The Uncertainty of Hope* (2006), some writers have analysed the novel, but from different perspectives as summarised by Mlambo (2013). These writers have explored critical issues of hope in hopeless situations, women in a patriarchal society, resilience, trauma and pragmatic morality. However, such expositions are unsatisfactory as they missed a critical dimension in the available studies, which is the holistic and balanced presentation of marriage, thus creating a paucity of literary criticism on this specific theme, which therefore is an un-investigated issue that this study sought to investigate.

All African Conference of Churches and Nyomi's (2000, as cited in Mburu, 2018), define marriage as an institution in which two loving people covenant themselves to be partners for life. They further note that the love the couples share is often challenged by humanness as two individuals with diverse histories, temperaments, feeling, and opinions, which may come into conflict. Even so, All African Conference of Churches and Nyomi (2000, as cited in Mburu, 2018), note that the heartaches associated with the conflicts can be minimised if couples acquire effective communication skills, which they can employ to resolve their conflict amicably.

The two novels proffer what Fincham and Beach (2010) explain with regards to the versions of marriages that are characterised by marital conflict, marital satisfaction, healthy marriages, the impact of marital outcomes and the impact of transactions and marital strengths, which are critical issues that are examined in the current study.

The study aimed at critically examining the theme of marriage as presented in the selected novels. Marriage can be imagined as a sacred institution that must be well prepared for. Failure to plan before entering the union is planning to fail after the union. Moreover, it is a general assumption, that every wedlock is bound to either succeed or fail depending on the attitudes and inputs of the spouses involved (Omage, 2013). Also, marriage is a ubiquitous institution as it encompasses all cultures, races, ethnic groups and religious groups (Vicent-Osaghae, 2007, as cited in Omage,

2013). Thus, marriage can be regarded as one of the critical aspects to human existence in any society.

Notable is that the institution of marriage has been witnessing several changes over the decades. Cherlin et al. (2012, as cited in John, Roro, Seme, & Tui, 2017) observe that, as in the West, changes in family patterns across the world have been more complex than a simple shift to a universal nuclear family. This is a fact that is demonstrated in the texts selected for the current study. George, Ukpong, and Imah (2014) maintain that various marriage practices have existed throughout the world and literary texts have explored this theme from diverse angles which call for closer scrutiny.

Furthermore, marriage, like other cultural and religious themes, has attracted various scholars of diverse depths, such as Fincham and Beach (2010) and Okiya (2016) . Most of these studies have focused on marital instability, marital conflict and dysfunctional marriages characterised by intimate partner violence and abuse from specifically male partners. So far, there has been little discussion about the presentation of marital relationship quality in its multiple dimensions and the importance of context, which in the present case is the settings of the novels in understanding diverse marital outcomes (Fincham & Beach, 2010). It is with this in mind that this study examined the textual representation of among others, marital satisfaction, marital quality, marital conflict and marital health and lack thereof in the two novels, *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* (2001) and *The Uncertainty of Hope* (2006).

1.3 Statement of the problem

The aim of this study was to critically examine how literary texts portray the complex and intricate qualities of marriage in the two novels set in post-independent Africa. The researcher explored and analysed issues attributed to marital stability and quality as depicted in the selected novels, that is, *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* by Andreas (2001) and *The Uncertainty of Hope* by Tagwira (2006). In a research, Ani (1998, as cited in Omage, 2013) zoom into critical issues that lead to marriage failure in Africa. Similarly, Muchena, Howcroft, and Stroud (2019) critically explore the same theme. However, this has been a one-dimensional perspective which fails to take note of instances of marital stability and quality. The problem is that those who have looked at marriage from these two novels and other literary works from Africa and elsewhere for example, Bodemann, Pihet, Kayser (2006) and Karney (2007), as cited in Fincham & Beach (2010), have looked at it in a one

directional interpretation without necessarily also exploring the possible positive aspects that can come out of marriage as captured by the novelists. Hence, the current study sought to offer a nuanced understanding of how African writers present marriage in the literary works as possible sites for functionality, quality and stability.

1.4 Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study were to:

1.4.1 Explore the ways in which marriage is portrayed in the two novels, *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* (2001) by Neshani Andreas and *The Uncertainty of Hope* (2006) by Valerie Tagwira;

1.4.2 Examine the representation of marital stability and quality in the two selected novels; and

1.4.3 Interrogate the causes of marital dissatisfaction and marital breakdown in the two selected novels.

1.5 Significance of the study

This study adds informed ideas to the growing existing literature and how it relates to gender, and it helps to inform other studies on gender in fiction about the availability of space for the complementarity of femininity and masculinity in literary works through the use of two theories, Masculinity and Nego-Feminism. This helps make possible a better understanding of the complex interlinking of studies on gender issues and provide valuable information for scholars, researchers, policymakers and academics as well as those who may be interested in the subject of literary presentation of the theme of marriage in the African context. Furthermore, it is envisaged that the study could encourage readers and researchers to view the selected texts from a different perspective and comprehend the text from a critical Masculinity and Nego-Feminism lens which differ from the generally used viewpoints.

1.6 Limitations of the study

The study focused only on two novels as well as the exploration of one theme in the two literary texts in the *Purple Violet of Oshaantu* (2001) and *The Uncertainty of Hope* (2006), which is marriage. Thus, the findings cannot be generalised to other novels and their characters, which may focus on the similar or different themes. In addition, the study was bound theoretically to Nego-Feminism and Masculinity theoretical approaches, which informed this study. This was done to

enable an in-depth analysis of the phenomenon of marriage. Another limitation was that whilst there are many novels on the subject, the researcher considered only two novels, one set in Namibia and the other set in Zimbabwe.

1.7 Delimitations of the study

The study was limited to the examination of the theme of marriage only in Andreas's *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* (2001) and Tagwira's *The Uncertainty of Hope* (2006). The findings of the current study were based on the literary representation of marriage through the characters' interactions specifically in *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* (2001) and *The Uncertainty of Hope* (2006) and the findings may not necessarily be universal to other literary texts of similar thematic concerns. Furthermore, the study was confined to the use of Masculinity and Nego-feminism as theoretical frameworks.

1.8 Organisation of the study

This study is organised as follow: Chapter 1 provides the orientation of the study. The objectives of the study are outlined and the study significance accentuated. The limitation and delimitations of the study are also presented as well as the statement of the problem underlined. Chapter 2 explicates the foundations and tenets of the two theories namely, Nego-Feminism and Masculinity in which the current study is couched. The chapter also reviewed literature and as such demonstrates how other scholars have applied these theories in the analysis of other literary works and for identical or different themes. This chapter further explains the gap that the current study sought to fill which was established through reviewing the available literature. Chapter 3 provides the methodology and discusses how this study was conducted ranging from the first step of critical reading to the last stage of the reporting of the findings, recommendations and conclusions. Chapter 4 is the analysis and discussion of the concept of marriage as re/presented in the two selected novels, Andreas's *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* (2001) and Tagwira's *The Uncertainty of Hope* (2006). It offers critical insights into the manner in which marriage is presented in the two texts as representing the culture and concept of marriage in the African context. Chapter 5 presents the summary and conclusions of the study guided by the objectives as set out in Chapter 1. It also provides suggestions for further future studies.

1.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter introduced the study, listed the objectives of the study, and highlighted the significance of the study as well as the limitations and delimitations of the study. The statement of the problem was stated, and the organisation of the study was outlined. The next chapter (Chapter 2) discusses the theoretical framework and provides a review of the available literature.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces and discusses the literature review within which the current study is located and the theoretical framework in which the current study is couched. The theoretical framework is discussed in relation to the title of the current research; explain the reasons as to why it best informs the study. The literature review is divided into subheadings (sections), which assist in reviewing the already existing knowledge base. The pre-existing corpus of literature acts as a justification for the reason why the current research should be conducted, as well as provides a basis on which this study was founded.

2.2 Review of related literature to this study

A literature review constitutes one of the critical sections of research. A thorough literature review establishes reliability in a research. O' Leary (2010, as cited in Kandemiri, 2018 p. 12) notes that, "a well-constructed literature review is an important criterion in establishing credibility". Likewise, Jacobs, Sorensen, and Walker (2014, as cited in Kandemiri, 2018 p. 12) hold that, "a careful review of the literature can help researchers revise their initial questions so that the final questions can be investigated" (p. 68).

Creswell (2008, p. 105) reiterates that, "The literature also helps the importance of the research problem or issue." Once more, Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2011) accentuate that, "a literature review sets out what the key issues are in the field to be explored, and why they are, in fact, key issues, and it identifies gaps that need to be plugged in the field" (p. 121). Therefore, all this contributes not only to the credibility and validity of the research, but to its topicality and significance, and it acts as springboard into the study, defining the field, what needs to be addressed in it, why and how it relates to – and extends -existing research in the field (Cohen et al., 2011). Given these reasons, building knowledge requires the researcher to be equipped with past knowledge through the process of reviewing the existing literature, proffering the literature review a dorsum from which the research is anchored. Hence, a careful literature review ensures a credible analysis of the selected texts, *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* (2001) and *The Uncertainty of Hope* (2006).

Furthermore, this study is located within a marriage matrix or model and specifically deals with marriage within the African context and precisely the presentation of marriage in *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* by Andreas (2001) and *The Uncertainty of Hope* by Tagwira (2006). The literature review is drawn from three broad areas that inform and enrich this study. These are, firstly, the ways in which marriage is portrayed in the two novels, secondly, the representation of marital stability and quality in the two selected novels, and thirdly, the causes of marital dissatisfaction and marital breakdown in the two selected novels.

The first area of literature review dealing with the portrayal, investigates and presents an overview of the notion of marriage within the African context. The review of this literature is relevant and crucial for this study since it introduces salient areas of African literature that find their roots in African - cultural marriages as an institution. Again, the second area dealing with the representation of marital stability and quality is relevant for this study since it investigates the equilibrium representation of marriage in literature from African perspective. Lastly, the area dealing with the causes of marital dissatisfaction and marital breakdown themes makes relevant the interrogation of the factors that lead to marital instability as the seedbed for African marriages. The reviewed literature included in this chapter positions the study in the historical background of the works that attempt to unravel the complex beliefs and interpretations of marital relationships amongst African scholars.

2.2.1 The concept of marriage

In the field of African literary studies, scholars, writers and researchers are determined to carry out researches on marital relationships, but focusing mainly on marital problems such as infidelity, domestic violence, abusive husbands, marital breakdown, divorce rate, just to name a few. This study however, strove for a nuanced examination by deviating from these common themes and focusing on the representation of both marital satisfaction and dissatisfaction in the analysis of *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* (2001) and *The Uncertainty of hope* (2006). In other words, this study sought for a balanced examination of the representation of the theme of marriage in the selected African literary texts.

Like many social terminologies, marriage is an essential but very contentious concept. Marriage and the idea of marriage are universal, but there is no one generally acceptable definition of marriage. Marriage "is a more or less durable connection between a male and a female lasting

beyond the mere act of propagation till the birth of the offspring" (Westermarck, 1968, as cited in Ogoma, 2014, p. 95). If a careful scrutiny of the import of Westermarck's (1968) definition of marriage is considered, it would mean that where there are no children, there is no marriage. In contrast, Westermarck (1968, as cited in George et al., 2014), rejected the definition years later and gave another more controversial definition of marriage as, "relation of one of one or more men to one or more women that is recognized by custom or law" (p. 95).

Leach (1967, as cited in George et al., 2014) expanded the definition and proposed that marriage is a relationship established between a woman and a man or more other persons. The rules of relationships do not prohibit a child born to the woman under circumstances. Nevertheless, he or she is accorded full-status right common to normal members of this society or social stratum. However, Bell (1960, as cited in George et al., 2014) criticised Leach's (1967) legitimacy-based definition on the grounds that, some societies do not require marriage for legitimacy, arguing that in societies where legitimacy means only that the mother is un-married and has no other legal implications, a legitimacy-based definition of marriage is secular. On the other hand, Bell (1960, as cited in George et al., 2014), rather proposed to define marriage in terms of sexual access rights.

2.2.2 African conception on marriage and family

Marriage is a ubiquitous institution as it encompasses all cultures, races, ethnic groups and/or religious (Vicent-Osaghae, 2007, as cited in Omage, 2013). Marriage occupies an important position in the affairs of Africans, especially in the past. Without marriage, there is no family, and without family, one could not bear children. Ogoma (2014) observes that the connection between marriage and family can hardly be separated among the traditional Africans. In recognition of this, Ayisi (1997, as cited in Ogoma, 2014) asserts that:

> …the family is then the logical outcome of marriage. A family consists of a man, his wife, and child or children. By this definition, a childless marriage is not a family. An individual belongs to at least one family in his lifetime. (p. 95)

Mbiti (1969, as cited in Dyson-Hudson & Meekers, 1996), notes that, for African people, marriage is the focus of existence. It is the point where all members of a given community meet: the departed, the living and those yet unborn. All dimensions of time meet here and the whole drama of history is repeated, renewed and revitalised. In a word, marriage is a drama in which everyone

becomes an actor or actress and not just spectator. According to Abraham (1987, as cited in Ogoma, 2014), marriage in African tradition is the joining of two families through the union of one man and one woman and their children, always to the exclusion of all other men as regards the women, and in monogamous societies, to the exclusion of all other women as regards the man. Moreover, the African traditional conception of marriage is seen as teleological. That is to say, it is primarily for procreation. Again, marriage can be dissolved on the ground of childlessness. The significance attached to children is however without basis. One major reason for that attachment is summed up in what Mbiti (1969, as cited in Dyson-Hudson & Meekers, 1996) calls "personal immortality". This implies that, when a man dies, he needs somebody to bear his name, so that his name does not die. Similarly, Awolalu and Adelumo (1979, as cited in Ogoma, 2014) postulate that the importance attached to children among the traditional Africans can be rationalised. Furthermore, the importance attached to children in marriage is also extended to an agrarian society, especially in the past, farm produce measured the manliness of a man. In other words, the more children a man bear, the more crops he is likely to produce and the more he is regarded as a real man. Admittedly, the higher the produce, the greater respect accorded to a man.

In addition, too many hands in the farm led to greater output. Besides the higher produce, leadership and chieftaincy roles were reserved for men who had many wives and children, because of the belief that if given leadership roles, such persons would be effective (Awolalu & Adelumo, 1979, as cited in Ogoma, 2014). In short, Africans were not taught how to die, but they believed that if they have many children, some of them would outlive them even if some of them would die.

According to Vicent-Osaghae (2007, as cited in Omage, 2013), marriage is a union between a man and a woman for life that is both voluntary and legal. In a legal marriage contract is exchanges of estates, properties, rights, privileges, roles and status. Beyond a legal contract, marriage is a covenant as it is entered into by agreement and the vows made by the parties when entering are for life, based on "till death do us part" commitment. Again, Kyalo (2012) alludes that, "a healthier understanding of marriage today can be appreciated if we carefully consider what I have referred to as "the kernel" of marriage, which are the properties of marriage and what makes it valid" (p. 2). Furthermore, Hendrix (1998, as cited in Kyalo, 2012), opines that a further comprehension of marriages amongst African societies suggests that there are at least three defining aspects of these

marriages; firstly, marriage is a transfer of legal rights to a woman from her kin to her husband. Not only does the husband gain rights to the wife's labour, sexuality and offspring, but also the rights to receive compensation for the harm done to her by others. Overall, these are some of the views of scholars forming the different perspectives on the concept of marriage.

2.2.3 Marriage in an African setting

"Marriage in Africa was the means of ensuring reproduction, but things changed" (Thompson, 2017, pp. 1-2). In addition, Thompson (2017) emphasizes that colonial-era anthropologists were inclined to see marriage as a mechanism within the kinship systems. Thompson (2017) further indicates that the wider pertinence of marriage has been achieved not only in the field of anthropology, but also history, law, politics, literature and gender studies. Thompson (2017) highlights some political and economic changes in the twentieth-century, for instance, in Kenya, which fostered a gendered marriage system amongst low-income, rural couples. Specifically, Thompson (2017) emphasised the significance of these dynamics, which have led to the growth of "accepted" extramarital sex amongst husbands migrating to the cities for employment. Such trends may offer a better explication why it is difficult for wives to protect themselves from HIV.

Thompson (2017) reveals that in Ghana, gender factors play a role in the conceptualisation of "consensual unions" between couples (p. 2). This evidence suggests that for unmarried women this is stigmatic, and as such unions are viewed as an interim economic and social solution, with marriage still being the end goal. On the other hand, men regard the relationship as an alternative to marriage, which to them represents stress and responsibilities that they hope to avoid. In the final part of this, Thompson (2017) explains that every marriage or union can be thought as "two marriages", existing simultaneously, as both partners experience it in a different way (p. 2).

Westermarck (1968, as cited in George et al., 2014) asserts that marriage in Africa is seen as sacred, as it solidifies relationships that enrich communities and nations by bringing forth new life and new hope. Although Africa is large and varied in cultures, as a continent containing some of the oldest civilisations on earth, it is a home to a wide diversity of religions and cultures. This colourful diversity is reflected in its colourful wedding ceremonies.

Once more, marriage has brought political stability in the growth of every major empire, and is even used to broker unity between belligerents in Africa. Hence, marriage between clans and

nations has historically been a way of securing peace and promoting trade. Commenting on pan-Africanism, Westermarck (1968), cited in George el al. (2014), adds that marriage and pan-Africanism are interlinked since it is the most central and common African tradition, sacred to all African people on the continent, therefore, serving as the building block of nationhood and the first form of unity. Therefore, suffice it to say that, in most societies according to studies, access to women is institutionalised in some ways to regulate the intensity of this competition**.**

2.2.4 Gender issues in relation to marriage in African context

"Gender" as a term refers to the system of relations between women and men and is socially constructed (Annan-Yao, 1998). As Sabao (2013, p. 81) explains, "our perspicacity of gender relations and gender identity have traditionally been dictated to us as a universal set of convictions and ways of behaviour, largely learnt through socialisation". In this respect, the concept designates behaviours, attitudes, roles, status that societies, assign to one or the other sex in a given socio-cultural settings and or in a particular socio-economic and socio-political context to govern relationships among the sexes. Similarly, Thobejane and Khoza (2014) define gender role as a social construct, which implies that each society allocates roles to girls and boys, men and women according to what the society considers appropriate.

In various African societies, gender is one of the critical aspects in terms of marital relationships. Marriage has been represented in a multiplicity of literary texts in Africa and African contexts such as, Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions* (1988), Andreas' *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* (2001), Mariama Ba's *So Long A Letter* (1979), Tagwira's The *Uncertainty of Hope* (2006) Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958) and Nyathi's *The Other Presence* (2011) among others. African cultures that favour gender discrimination contributed to the chaos in one way or another, and resulted in many African marriages characterised by especially wife abuse. In this light, Aina (1998, as cited in Omage, 2013), corroborates the dominance of patriarchy in the Nigerian family, where husbands dictate to wives anything relating to the upkeep of the home and in most cases they have the final say in issues relating to child bearing, child rearing and the general conduct in the home. When a woman 'misbehaves' tradition empowers the man to correct his wife, with some men even beating up their wives repeatedly to the point of injury. Moreover, Oyewumi (2005, as cited in Akin-Aina, 2011) holds the views that, the understanding of the social construction of gender as means by which all women are oppressed universally and across the world does not take

into account variations in histories, world-views and social organisations across the globe. In short, this implies that just as parents reprimand and beat children, women are viewed and treated in a similar manner, but the wives do not ordinarily have the same privilege of reprimanding or hitting their husbands too even when they "misbehave".

Furthermore, gender relations vary not only from one community to another, but also according to different social classes in a given society (Anna-Yao, 2004). If gender roles in marriage are historically and culturally specific and what it means to be man or women varies over place and time, definitely these variations need to be investigated (Thobejane & Khoza, 2014). The previous claim can be confirmed when Tambu in Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions* complains;

> My father thought I should not mind. Is that anything to worry about? Ha-a-a, it is nothing, he reassured me, with his usual ability to jump whichever was easiest. Can you cook books and feed to your husband? Stay at home with your mother. Learn to cook and clean. Grow vegetables. (Dangarembga, 1988, p. 15)

Tambu's expression draws attention to the subjugation of women by men and the patriarchal society to which African women have been subjected for so long. Again, from the same quotation, one would deduce that Dangarembga explicates that Tambu, who is a female is ambitious and desires to pursue her education, but being a woman, who is subjected to a patriarchal society and African cultural traditions, cannot go to school. In other words, in a patriarch run society, education is not for women, but for men. What is more, unequal roles are assigned to members of society on basis of their sexes, and learnt through the processes of socialisation (Sabao, 2013). These gender roles are differentiated and assigned according to what is considered suitable for men and women (Thobejane & Khoza, 2014). As Sabao (2013, p. 81) explains that in Africa, "…traditionally, society had prescriptive ways of ascribing behaviour patterns based on gender. This did not just include social roles but also behaviour and linguistic patterns. Society believed that there were ways in which males and females behaved, not just in roles but even in the manner in which they speak, what they speak about and how they speak about it." Thus, women are generally tasked roles that are primarily household chores and nurturing, while men were assigned roles associated with the public domain.

By examining Dangaremba's *Nervous Conditions* (1988), one observes that women roles within marriage are constructed in line with household chores, such as rearing of children, washing,

cleaning and cooking for their husbands among others. A notable example of these household related duties can be drawn from *Nervous Conditions* when Dangarembga (1988) states;

> "… I had evidence. Maiguru was educated, and did she serve Babamukuru books for dinner? I discovered to my unhappy relief that my father was not sensible. I complained to my mother. "Babamukuru says I do not need to be educated,' I told her scornfully. "He says I must learn to be a good wife. Look at Maiguru,' I continued, unaware how viciously … "she is a better wife than you!' (p. 16)

Moreover, the issue of marriage should be seen in the context of what motherhood means in our societies. Thus, the concept of motherhood and womanhood cannot be divorced from the relationship between the wife and the husband. This relationship, in most cases, is more inclined towards a patriarchal discourse (Ramaite, 2010, as cited in Thobejane & Khoza, 2014). Ramaite's (2010) claim corroborates the ideas in Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions* (1988), when Dangarembga notes that, "…and these days it is worst, with the poverty of blackness on one side and the weight of womanhood on the other. Aiwa! What will help you, my child, is to learn to carry your burdens with strength" (p.16). However, Ramaite (2010, as cited in Thobejane & Khoza, 2014) further argues that women bring life to this world and they have a duty to make sure that life is preserved and protected. Overall, this section highlights gender role in relation to marriage.

2.2.5 Marital stability and marital satisfaction

In research as well as in everyday life, a long term and enduring marriage is often considered a major life goal and a key indicator not only for marital success, but also well-being and health (Proulx, Helms, & Blueler, 2007, as cited in Margelishch et. al, 2017). They further prove that marital stability usually indicates increased well-being, whereas marital changes are amongst the most stressful life events. Although the positive association between stable marital status, well-being and health is well established, contemporary research suggests that this effect depends primarily on the quality of conjugal relationship and not on marital status (Carr, Freeman, Cornman, & Schwart, 2014). Additionally, there is a colossal body of literature on marital satisfaction and well-being outcomes during different stages of marriage. Yet, little is known on this regard in long-term continuously married older individuals.

Several studies including Levenson, Carsteinsen, and Gottman (1993) reveal a relatively high marital satisfaction in long-term marriages. It has also been observed that relationships follow a curvilinear pattern over the life course, declining in the earlier years of marriage and increasing through the later years. On the other hand, Umberson, Williams, Pows, Liu, and Needham (2006, as cited in Carr et al., 2014) note that other study results revealed that marital happiness tend to diminish over time. They also asserted that marital quality is stronger and consistently associated with age than with marital duration. In brief then, these findings demonstrate the potential schism between relationship stability and relationship satisfaction. It is also pertinent as staying in an unhappy marriage, has been associated with low values in overall happiness, satisfaction with life, self-esteem and health as well as a higher likelihood of various psychological distresses.

Various studies (Amato & Booth, 1997, as cited in Parker, 2000) claim that strong and stable families are acknowledged to provide the optimum framework for children's wellbeing, and the foundation for becoming responsible adults. However, this claim needs to be closely analysed using context specific empirical findings and hence the need to analyse the two selected novels. Moreover, Amato and Booth (1997, as cited in Parker, 2000) further allude that these protective benefits of marriage and family life for parents and children appear to apply only in marriages that are not faced with severe problems. There is abundant literature on marital relationships, marital quality and an emerging understanding of marriage as both a site for fostering quality relationships and on the other hand abuse (Erulkar, 2013; Tilson & Larson, 2000, as cited in Mawere & Mawere, 2010). The challenge then is to explore and put to the test these views using fiction set in a Southern African context.

Moreover, strong and stable families provide the optimum framework for children's well-being and the foundation for becoming responsible adults (Amato et al., 1996, as cited in Australian Institute of Family Studies, 1999). In Ethiopia for example, despite the universality of marriage, literature on marital relationship and understanding of relationship quality and their potential linkages with health and well-being are almost non-existent. In this case, most of the Ethiopian literature on marriage focuses on early marriage, its causes and consequences (Erulkar et al., 2013 as cited in John et al., 2017). However, the key problem with this explanation is that studies have neglected to understand emotional processes and other couple relational factors within marriage that could be linked to health and well-being. By neglecting this area of research, an important link

in building the health and well-being of individuals and communities in this context, which might contribute to marital stability and satisfaction.

According to the Australian Institute of Family Studies (1999), over the decades, researchers from the disciplines of family therapy and psychology have attempted to identify and measure the components of 'healthy' families in contrast to dysfunctional families in order to develop typologies of functional families. More so, Stinnet and DeFrain's (1985, as cited by the Australian Institute of Family Studies, 1999) assert through the Family Strengths Model, that strong families exhibit the following qualities: commitment, appreciation, time together, spiritual well-being, and the ability to cope with stress and crisis. Similarly, strong families that also respect individuality, are able to disagree and to compromise and use crises as an opportunity to grow. As a result, Stinnet and DeFrain (1985, as cited in the Australian Institute of Family Studies, 1999), maintain that these two models of family functioning complement each other. All these family strengths are interrelated, overlap to some degree, and interact with each with each other.

Another characteristic of strong families is their connection with extended family (Australian Institute of Family Studies, 1999). Most importantly, is their willingness to seek help from these resources whenever support is needed. So, many of these attributes are encompassed within the concept of family resilience, a concept that Walsh (2012) defines as "the ability to withstand and rebound from crisis and adversity" (p. 25). Resilient families that are able to adapt successfully to changing circumstance and stressful situations exhibited the previously described qualities of flexibility, communication and problem-solving skills, and access to and use of support networks and community resources (McCubbin et al., 1995, as cited in Australian Institute of Family Studies, 1999). Overall, there seems to be some evidence to indicate that there is a strong association between stable marital relationships and well-being and health.

2.2.6 Forms of marriages in some culture in Africa

George et al. (2014) observe that, "Various cultures across the globe have various traditions and ritual with the solemn ritual of marriage" (p. 10). The Western world and the Eastern world vary much in these rituals and traditions, as there is more than one type of marriage. In addition, different marriages are approached in different ways - some prefer one type of marriage whereas others prefer the other. They further argued that a variety of marital practices have existed throughout the globe, historically. In some society, an individual is limited to marry one partner at

a time (monogamy), while other cultures allow a male to have more than one wife (polygamy), more or less commonly, a female to have more than one husband (polyandry). Some societies allow marriage between two males, or two females while others have certain restrictions on marriage based on the numbers and ages of the participants, pre-existing kinship, and membership in religious or other social groups. George et al. (2014) expounds that, polyandry as a form of marriage is much less common. Polyandry is especially suited to populations that have more males than females, which is perhaps the reason why it is less common than polygamy, as females outnumber males in most societies.

Amiru (2010, as cited in George et al., 2014) identified three types of marriages practiced in Nigeria namely: traditional marriage or Native law and custom; Religions (Church); and Civil (Court) marriage. In this case, A Nigerian couple can decide to take part in one or all of them and the number usually boils down to culture and wealth. However, Amiru (2010, as cited in George et al., 2014), further explicates that, "two major forms of marriages exist in Nigeria; monogamy-a marriage of one man to one woman and polygamy- a marriage of one man to two or more wives, and such a practice cuts across almost all of the tribes in Nigeria" (p. 9)

In Namibia, for example, all forms of marital unions exist, such as through church, magistrate, customary, cohabitation, never married, divorced, and widowed. According to Indongo and Pazvakawambwa (2015), in traditional rural African societies, the contraction of marriage was dominated by arranged marriages whereby parents usually indulged in the selection of marriage partners for their children especially daughters without their consent. To date, this has been altered to the extent that some countries have adopted policies that strive to advocate for the consent of both parties that are to be married. For example, the Tanzania Marriage Act of 1971 and the Ivory Coast Civil Code of 1964 (Indongo & Pazvakawambwa, 2015).

Indongo and Pazvakawambwa (2015) furthermore, argue that, "the adoption of these acts does not imply that the involvement of parents in the marriage of their children has stopped" (p. 2). However, the adoption of these acts have helped to promote the recognition of the consent of the parties to be married as well as fostered the existence of the acknowledgement that it is the right of prospective partners to select their partners.

2.2.7 Modes of contracting marriage in African societies

According to Phillips (2018), there is always some differences between theory and practice. "Every marriage arranged by elders is not necessarily forced upon an unwilling couple; nor, on the other hand, does the formal expression of consent which a bride is often required to give necessarily reflect her genuine opinion" (Phillips, 2018, p. 5). In practice, the relative effectiveness of parental pressure and filial determination varies from case to case as well as between different societies. Apart from this, among many persons, who theoretically believe that the elders arrange young peoples' marriages, there are recognised means by which the latter can assert their own choice.

Also Phillips (2018) further notes:

> …there are a number of different ways in which a man can establish his position as a woman's legal husband and the legal father of her children. They all involve some forms of "quid pro quo" given by the husband or his senior relatives on his behalf to the parents or other senior relatives of his wife. It is popularly supposed that the requirement of this "quid pro quo", when it consists in goods, is tantamount to the sale of a woman, and, in the early days in South Africa, the courts refused to recognise as valid a marriage in which cattle had passed. Closer acquaintance with the custom has shown that to regard it in this light is to misinterpret its meaning. (p. 5)

Taking a cue from what Phillips (2018) argues for, the cattle that is often involved in these modes of contracting marriage is viewed as the sale of a woman in some African societies. However, if a closer look at the custom is taken, it may be a misinterpretation of its meaning. Phillips (2018) posits that these modes have two essential features, such as the transfer, as the act which makes marriage legal, establishes the legitimacy of the children, form a pledge for the maintenance of the marriage, since they must be returned if it is dissolved. Phillips (2018) further states that, "these features may be combined, and normally are so in the case of the cattle payment, in that if the marriage is dissolved the number of children born are offset against the number of cattle to be returned" (p. 5)

Even though some view the payment as a form of commercial transaction and that a woman may be regarded as a slave to his husband, Phillips (2018) emphasised that the payment does not make

the wife her husband's property, or place her in the relationship of a slave to him. There is a crucial distinction between the status of a wife and that of a slave, which is that, the slave is transferable by his owner to another man. However, Phillips (2018, p. 5) stresses that, "there are some societies where a slave traditionally formed part of marriage payment".

Furthermore, various anthropologists have rejected the term 'bride-price' which was formerly used for the "quid pro quo que" (bride price) to its suggestion of a sale. Conversely, the phrase which describes it in various African languages can be literally translated 'marriage payment' or even 'marriage money' (Phillips, 2018). However, a payment is not necessarily a price, and can be done in many transactions, which are not commercial transactions. A classic example of the African customary marriage practice can be drawn from the *Kukumbira* (asking for a bride or woman's hand in marriage from her parents, but with her informed consent), in particular among the Shona ethnic group of Zimbabwe (Meekers, 1993, as cited in Mawere & Mawere, 2010). Mawere and Mawere (2010) emphasise that, nominative marriage customs of the Shona-speaking people are characterised by negotiation and payment of the bride price. What is more, the payment of the bride price, the main part, which is called r*oora* or *lobola* for the Shona and Ndebele people of Zimbabwe respectively, is the basis of marriage and family obligations. However, despite the continuing emphasis on *lobola p*ayments in the ethnographic literature, studies suggest that 'deviant' types of unions are becoming increasingly common, but little is known about their causes (Meekers, 1993, as cited in Mawere & Mawere, 2010). Taken together, these findings provide important insights into the modes of contracting marriage in some African societies.

2.2.8 Modernity changes African customary trajectory

Cherlin (2014, as cited in John et al., 2017) argues that changes are witnessed in parts of Sub-Saharan Africa in the material context, such as later entry into marriage as women's increasing pursuit of higher education and careers, signify profound changes in social relations within the family, marriage and labour market. Evidence of these shifts in the structure and functions of marriage are visible in the Sub-Saharan African context too and this study seeks to explore the structures and functions of marriage as presented in the selected novels.

The process employed by parents to choose and arrange spouses for their children is viewed as an age long practice in some, if not most part of the continent (Afric Editorial, 2019). Parents had total control over the choice of the spouse of their children and could either reject or accept a suitor

if he or she does not meet their convictions. Most parents identify and arrange a spouse whom they either believe to be from a responsible and wealthy family or whose family's background they verified and approved. However, in recent times much has changed and the paradigm is shifting more towards children making the choices for themselves (Afric Editorial, 2019). As a result of these changes, Cherlin (2014, as cited in John et al., 2017), proffers that the power of the husband is diminishing and marital relationships are becoming more centred on love and companionship, and such are the ideas that need to be interrogated through using the selected novels for this study. In addition, Kannae's (1999, as cited in John et al., 2017) explored the nature of marriage by looking at correlates of marital quality among Ghanaian men and found that less traditional decision-making and open communication were strong predictors of marriage quality.

Likewise, Obbo and Meekers (1999, as cited in Mawere & Mawere, 2010, p. 225) explore the African customary marriage practice and argue that:

> There is gradual erosion of nominative marriage customs in favour of more informal types of unions. This has been observed in various African societies, especially among the better-educated and urban segments of the population. Most theories attribute this decline in the prevalence of formal marriages to the gradual breakdown of the influence of the lineage and to changes in the relative status of men and women that result from socioeconomic transformations.

In societies where the bride price is higher, there is a tendency to value premarital virginity and males, in particular fathers and brothers, have an interest in controlling the marriage patterns of women and consequently bride price is high (Obbo, 1998, as cited in Mawere & Mawere, 2010). Scholars such as, Jean-Philippe and Fredric (2007, as cited in Mawere & Mawere, 2010, p. 225) observe that, "bride wealth charges have been viewed as contributing factors to marriage breakups." This is the problem that many modernised societies of Africa have tried to criticise hence challenging the normative marriage customs. In general, colonialism together with globalisation in Africa have been both praised on one hand and criticised on another for transforming most parts of Africa's traditions (Mawere & Mawere, 2010).

On a negative, the transformation of African societies towards 'modernity' and practices where the methodological and epistemological hallmarks of the hegemonic dynamics of the African colonial era are still in the place- marks that characterised and continue to shape the discourses

about Africa (Mawere & Mawere, 2010). A prototypical example of the African traditional forms of marriage culture that has been dramatically affected under the disguise of modernity is the *tsika dzokuroorana*, in Shona, Zimbabwe. Thus, colonialism and the tide of modernisation that has swept across Zimbabwe and by extension Africa are partly blamed for the daunting of the highly esteemed customary marriage practice of "*kukumbira."* Collectively, these studies outline a critical role of modernisation in the transformation of African traditional forms of marriage.

2.2.9 Four types of marriages

According to Wallerstein and Blakeslee (1996, as cited in Hill, 2001), there are four types of marriages which include: romantic, rescue, companionate, and traditional. Wallerstein and Blakeslee (1996) as cited in Hill (2001) argue that, "…each type of marriage provides a different degree and kind of closeness between husband and wife." (p. 21). The core difference being the way that the husband and wife view their roles. Sometimes the relationship remains clearly constant throughout the marriage. "In others, the core relationship may shift gradually or change radically at a critical developmental transition, such as the birth of the first child, midlife or retirement" (Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1996, as cited in Hill, 2001, p. 21).

In the romantic marriage, the couples seem to continually focus on the time they met, the place they met, and even the feelings associated with this time in their lives. "The romantic marriage has at its core a lasting, passionately sexual relationship" (Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1996, as cited in Hill, 2001, p. 22). "The rescue" differs from each of the other marriage types. This type of marriage is often coined the 'walking wounded'. "The healing that it undergoes during the course of the marriage is the central theme" (Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1996, as cited in Hill, 2001, p. 22). This marital relationship provides space in the marriage specifically for healing.

The third type of marriage is the "companionate". "The major factor in companionate marriage is the attempt to balance the partners' serious emotional investment in the workplace with their emotional investment in the relationship and the children" (Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1996, as cited in Hill, 2001, p. 22). This marriage is most common amongst the younger generations because of the belief in equality of all labour and household tasks. The core of this relationship is friendly, and equality. Lastly, the "traditional marriage" is the exact opposite of the companionate marriage. The core of this union is in the division of labour and household chores. "The women take charge of the home and family while the man is the primary wage earner" (Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1996,

as cited in Hill, 2001, p. 22). However, the renegotiation may take place once the children leave and the household chores are not as arduous as they once were. Another time may be in retirement. With, retirement the typical nine-to-five wage earner is not leaving the house and therefore may partake in duties once held primarily by the other spouse. Each of these instances was supported in Wallerstein and Blakeslee (1996, as cited in Hill, 2001). In view of all that has been said, the studies presented significant insights on the four types of marriages.

2.2.10 Marital concurrency as a risk for infection of HIV/AIDS in marriage Africa

As early as the 1990s researchers recognised that marriage could be a risk factor in acquiring HIV infection. Data from the studies conducted, mostly in India, Thailand and some African countries have shown contradictory findings in the relationship between marital status and HIV status. For example, one study from Zimbabwe associated HIV-positive status with being single (Shinana, Toef, Zungu, & Simbayi, 2004).

Another research by Fox (2014) identified sexual concurrency as a potential underlying driver of high HIV/AIDS infection level in Sub-Sahara Africa. The researcher covered sixteen African countries, employing a multi-level model of Demographic and Health Surveys. Fox's (2014) study asserted the relationship between an individual's HIV serostatus and rates of formal and informal marital concurrency (% polygamous unions, % extramarital partner past year) among married men and women. HIV infection was higher among individuals living in regions with more informal marital concurrency, but lower in regions with more polygamy, even accounting for individual-level sexual behaviour (Fox, 2014, p.1).

According to Shinana et al. (2004), "the risk of HIV in marriage is directly linked to non-use of condoms" (p. 2). Some studies have found that married people are less likely to use condoms as a preventative strategy for HIV. A study in rural Zimbabwe observed that 92% of married women use monogamy or abstinence as a primary means to prevent HIV infection. While these women were taking protective measures by being faithful to their partners or husbands, the majority of men in the same study admitted to having casual extramarital relationships, thus increasing the risk of HIV transmission to their spouses. Cultural expectations are also other contributing factors when it is acceptable for a man to have extramarital affairs while the same is not acceptable for women. A paradigmatic example can be drawn from Andreas' text, *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu*

(2001). “I see Shange behaving like this towards his wife. His latest extra-marital affair is with a young woman from the nearby village” (Andreas, p. 3).

The current study finds it worrisome that very few studies have examined the risk of infection in married persons and their role in transmitting HIV. The assumption may be that once married, the risk of HIV infection drops significantly. Shinana et al. (2004) further posit that unmarried women and divorced women, on the other hand, were more likely than married ones to use condoms or abstinence as a protective strategy. In brief, the evidence presented in this section has enlightened the reader with important insights into how marital concurrency may expose married couples to the risk of HIV and AIDS infection.

2.2.11 Perceived causes of marital dissatisfaction and breakdown in Africa

Marlowe (1968) defines marital dissatisfaction as, “a level of feelings about marriage and or the spouse from very positive to negative” (p. 22). According to Lamanna and Riedmann (2002, as cited in Mburu, 2018), marriage was meant to provide support, love and on-going emotional support. However, this has drastically changed with an increasing number of marriages experiencing conflicts and in some cases breakdown and the couples going their separate ways. As a result, this has made marriages to become considerably less permanent now than in the past. By logic, it can be arguable that marital conflict and marriage breakdowns are intertwined in the sense that, conflicts might lead to marital breakdown. Nyomi (2000, cited in Mburu, 2018, p. 58), defines marital conflict as, “the absence of coherence, harmony or agreement between the parties involved.” Whereas Gichinga (2007, cited in Mburu, 2018), argues that marital happiness is the balance between good and bad marriages and further points out that, in the absence of the balance, conflict becomes inevitable.

In addition, Geurin et al. (2013, cited in Mburu, 2018), hold that marital conflict is not just a difference of opinions, but rather, a series of events that have been poorly handled to deeply damage the marriage relationship. Geirin et al.’s (2013) argument makes sense, for the reason that if marriage issues have festered to the point that stubbornness, pride, anger, hurt, and bitterness prevent marriage communication, this may result in marital breakdown and eventually end up in divorce.

Throughout the current thesis, the causes of marital conflict and breakdown become a significant theme that affects every married couple as in a relationship characterised by intimacy, as in marriage, some conflict are anticipated. In addition, intimate marriage relationship provides more chances for likely conflicting views and desires to surface (John et al., 2017). Naturally, no two normal gifted persons need the same things all the time or view issues in accurately the same way. Given the fact that each person is a unique being, conflict is eminent in marriage relationships. Likewise, Stears and Khan (2002) posit that the causes of marital breakdown and its consequences for family life have drawn much attention in different disciples such as psychology, social work, sociology, anthropology and psychiatry. Stears and Khan (2002) also observe that the causes of marriage breakdowns are known to be numerous. This implies that, no single cause is known to predispose married couples to a point of breaking up. In spite of this, a combination and interaction of a number of causal factors has the likely potential to affect marital stability. Mburu (2018) and Stears and Khan (2002) highlight some factors that contribute to marital breakdown namely: communication breakdown, infidelity, financial problems, arranged marriages, religious differences, marital violence and abuse, alcohol and drug abuse, women's participation in the labour force and liberation, childlessness, early marriages, in-laws, witchcraft, premarital sex, sexual dysfunctions and other sexual issues. In view of all that has been mentioned so far, one may suggest that these causes are the main contributing factors for conjugal relationships breakdown.

2.2.11.1 Communication breakdown

One study on Christian perspective on the contemporary home, (Jack & Judith, 2013, as cited in Mburu, 2018), define communication as, "the honest expression of thought and emotion between couples, which brings them to know one another in a very personal way characterised by mutual respect" (p. 59). Furthermore, Melgosa and Melgosa (2011, as cited in Mburu, 2018) hold the view that communication breakdown is one of the major factors that contribute to conflict among married couples. Communication is regarded as the heart of a family's life through which family members interact through verbal and non-verbal exchanges to express their thoughts, wishes and their core emotions.

Ajaegbu and Ajike (2015) assert that, "Communication skills have been identified as one of the ingredients to a healthy marriage" (p. 4). On the other hand, Mattews (n.d., as cited in Ajaegbu & Ajike, 2015) states that, "if love is the heartbeat of marriage, communication is its lifeblood".

Mattews (n.d., as cited in Ajaegbu & Ajike, 2015) further adds that many research studies of family strengths found communication to be a common thread in keeping family relationships strong and viable. In brief, these studies provide the evidence that effective communication is the connector of the relationships.

2.2.11.2 Marital infidelity

Mapfumo (2016, p. 110) defines marital infidelity as:

> …a violation of the commitment to sexual royalty by one or both members of a committed relationship; extra dyadic sex within the context of a monogamous relationship; a sexual, romantic or emotional involvement that violates a commitment to an exclusive relationship and a partner's violation of norms regulating the level of emotional or physical with people outside the committed relationship.

What is more, marital infidelity or unfaithfulness extra-marital has been a focal point of discussion in most Africa women-authored texts, such as *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* (2001), *The Uncertainty of Hope* (2006), *So Long a Letter* (1979), just to name a few. Given the fact that many of these critics are women, it might be arguable that marriage has been represented only from a unidirectional perspective. In this case a feminist perspective thus, lacking a balanced perspective thereof. Thus, those who explored issues of marriage have mostly focused on the dysfunctional marriage without necessarily taking into account the ideal aspects, which may also come out of marriage, hence, creating a possible dearth or gap in literature that the current study seeks to possibly fill.

Marital infidelity is also one of the commonly known critical issues that contribute to marital conflicts and breakdown. The violation of exclusive sexual rights commitment in relationships is a threat to the institution of marriage. Additionally, in light of instances when this commitment to exclusive sexual rights is violated by either of or both the marital partners, the assumption reflected in Ba*'s So Long A Letter* (1979), results:

> Remember, I was your daughter's best friend. You made her my mother's rival. Remember for five years you deprived my mother and her twelve children their breadwinner. Remember my mother has suffered a great deal. How can a woman saps the happiness of another? You deserve no pity. Pack up. As for Binetou, she is a victim,

> your victim. I feel sorry for her! Lady Mother- in-Law sobbed. Binetou? Indifference itself. (p. 74)

Analysing the above quotation, one could comprehend how infidelity can breed conflict in marriage. Again, most societies are restrictive in their norms regarding adulterous relationships, due to the assumption that the married are not sexually deprived and as such, extra-marital activities weaken the sanctity of marriage and as such make marital relationships vulnerable to breakdown.

In contrast, Labriola (1997, as cited in Stears & Khan, 2002) asserts that this tradition has changed after the 'sex revolution' of the 1960s and 1970s, predominantly in Western societies, leading to the emergence of novel sexual freedom after the advent of effective birth control through the 'pill' and by women entering the paid labour force and demanding equality with men. Hence, this transformation of sexual mores made it possible for men and women to engage in many new types of relationships, particularly in marriage. However, the discovery of an extramarital affair is known to bring about a crisis between the spouses or their families and interferes with a person's ability to function effectively (Truhe, 1998, as cited in Stears & Khan, 2002). Throughout the bulk of the reviewed related literature, extramarital relationship has been one of the major motifs. Hence, this idea is corroborated in the *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* (2001), in which Andreas observes:

> I see Shange behaving like this towards his wife. His latest extramarital affair is with a young woman from the nearby village. He is often seen with her at the *cuca* shop belonging to his friend, the local teacher, Mr Jackson. Shange has built her a two-roomed blockhouse, painted white. Since then his wife Kauna and I have nicknamed her the woman from the "white-house". Shange does not even bother to conceal his relationship. His car is often seen in the broad daylight parked in front of the "white house". I turned to Mee Maita, who is… (p. 3)

From observing the evidence presented above, it would be thought that that infidelity is imagined as one of the central issues that leads to matrimonial conflicts and marital breakdown, which may eventually result in divorce. Certainly, due the fact that extramarital and infidelity have been the focal attention of various critics across the globe and in particular, in Africa, it would be of interest to provide another example that reinforces the intensity of infidelity in African authored texts:

> She looks at him… The front of his shirt was emblazoned with bright red smudges. Lipstick! Her heart contracted painfully. His zip was undone and the edge of his shirt was offensively sticking out of the fly. She did not have to think too hard to imagine what he had been up to. His shoes were encrusted with what looked suspiciously like a thick layer of vomit. (Tagwira, 2006, p. 8)

Infidelity and extramarital affairs have attracted scholars of various depth and disciplines. Overall, these studies provided an important opportunity to advance a better understanding of infidelity or extra-marital and its possible consequences within marriage.

2.2.11.3 Age at marriage and characteristics of match

According to White and Cherlin (1999, as cited in Takyi, 2012, p. 85), individuals are likely to vary in their attitudes towards marital affairs. It is believed that among personal factors that lead to marital instability, and especially divorce, are age at marriage, the duration of marriage, previous marital history and the number of time a person has gotten married. Furthermore, various researches (Fernandez & Rogerson, 2001 as cited in Lehrer & Chen, 2013) observe that dimensions of the match as a factor, nothing that women who married in their late twenties or later tended to form unions with characteristics observed in earlier researches that were argued to be associated with higher marital instability. They were more likely to marry men who had been previously married and who are younger than they are by three years or more. These patterns closely mirror those uncovered earlier, for cycles 5 and 6, and are suggestive of poor- match effect as the biological clock begins to tick. With regard to cycle 5, which contained richer husbands' characteristics, there is evidence that women who postpone marriage are also more likely to enter unions that are heterogamous in two others important dimensions, namely, education and religion (Lehrer & Chen, 2013). More so, in all cycles, women who delay marriage themselves have characteristics generally been associated with marital instability and they are more likely to have a child from a previous union and/or to have previously cohabitated. Overall, these patterns suggest that women who marry in their late twenties or after disproportionately enter unconventional matches. However, at the same time, the absence of a U-shape in all cycles indicates that the unions they form tend to be solid (Lehrer & Chen, 2013).

2.2.11.4 Financial constraints in relation to marital breakdown

Besides communication difficulties or breakdown and infidelity, financial problem is also one of the critical factors that contribute to marital conflicts and marital breakdown. All African Conference of Churches and Nyomi (2000, as cited in Mburu, 2018), posit that financial aspect is a major potential factor to marital conflict. At no time before has marital conflict been triggered by financial matters it has manifested today. Kim (2013, as cited in Mburu, 2018) suggest that women have become full time income earners and men on the other hand are doing more jobs within the household than their fathers used to. In this case, it is contrary to what the men and women experienced when growing up, as their fathers were the bona fide bread earner of the family. Consequently, the upper hand enjoyed by women in contributing to the family budget is accompanied by some resentment towards man as the head of the family and eventually leads to marital conflict (Kim, 2013, as cited in Mburu, 2018).

Vogler and Pahl (1999, as cited in Stears and Khan, 2002, p. 381) suggest that, "there is increasing evidence that there is an association between money, power and inequality in marriage." It may, therefore, be asserted that the socio-economic status of the married couple is associated with marital breakdown. Therefore, the likelihood of lower income group families being placed under greater marital strain by unemployment and financial problems cannot be dismissed (Amato, 1996, as cited in Stears & Khan, 2002).

Mburu (2018) observes that, "if either of the spouses lost his or her employment whereas the other is gainfully employed, the later tends to view the former as inferior" (p. 60). In such a case, the gainfully employed spouse sees the other as not worth contributing to or consulting when it comes to decision making on matters concerning the marriage relationship or finances in the family. With such a superiority complex, the gainfully employed party also develops a spending habit void of consultation (Mburu, 2018). Additionally, the family budget may be deliberately manipulated to suit their needs and concerns with minimal considerations on the material needs of the other party and sometimes the family's future. As a result, such actions in turn cause conflicts amongst the couples. Decisions, which mostly concern financial issues, are often sensitive and people tend to perceive the resulting power as one-sided.

According to Lamanna and Riedmann (2007, cited in Mburu, 2018, p. 60), "if financial matters are not effectively addressed, the superiority-inferiority complexes, resulting from imbalanced

financial abilities and marginalization in decision making between couples in marital relationship leads to discontent and conflicts in the family". Lamanna and Riedmann (2007, as cited in Mburu, 2018) further reiterate that couples are more likely to break-up when one partner has more power in decision-making. Likewise, Mbiti and Dueck (2007, as cited in Mburu, 2018) expound that a couple's perceptions towards finance related matters are a major factor that contributes to marital conflicts.

Obi (1970, as cited in Omage, 2013) argues that when there is a sustained lack of improvement in a marriage, either spouses may give-up hope since many needs in the home such as unpaid bills, feeding, health, educational, and other needs may lie unmet. In some cases, a spouse may abscond to an unknown destination due to obsequious poverty. This may result from the breadwinner being either unemployed or having been dismissed from his job as is sometimes the case with husbands. Tikumah (2009, as cited in Omage, 2013, p. 330) supports this view and observes that, "…it is the Nigerian man's responsibilities to bring food, clothes, shelter as well as other essential needs of the entire family and also to pay children's school fees". Tikumah (2009, as cited in Omage, 2013), adds that where a man is unable to live up to economic and financial expectations and responsibilities due to poverty or carelessness, the household is said to be in a state of economic dissatisfaction and this may lead to a marital breakdown or failure. Collectively, the authors' views expressed in this study provide important insights into how financial problem may cause marital conflicts, breakdown and possibly divorce in matrimonial relationships.

2.2.11.5 Religious differences

According to Booth, Johnson, White and Edwards (1989) as cited in Xu (1996), marital instability is defined as "including gamut of activities from thinking about and discussing divorce to actually filing or either separation or divorce" (p.1). Religious difference is viewed as a complementary trait for marital stability. It is known to enhance marital companionship. Lehrer and Chiswick (1993, as cited in Stears & Khan, 2002) emphasise that households in which spouses differ in their religious preferences are known to enjoy reduced efficiency and are characterised by greater marital conflict. Likewise, Lammana and Riedmann (1991, as cited in Stears & Khan, 2002) assert that the social and moral constraints that once kept unhappy marriages together are less strong than before, making marital breakdown more acceptable. Also, Lehrer and Chiswick (1991, as cited in

Stears & Khan, 2002) found that houses in which spouses differ in their religious preferences are known to enjoy reduced efficiency and are likely to be characterised by greater marital conflicts.

Coleman and Cressey (1990, as cited in Stears & Khan, 2002) examine marital instability and estimated that marital violence and abuse is prevalent in one in every two marriages. Often the typical pattern of marital violence graduates from kicking, slapping and punching to severe burns, fractures, internal injuries, miscarriages and attempted strangulations and drowning – a continuation and deliberate pattern of intimidation and control (Stears & Khan, 2002). Like Coleman and Cressey (1990, as cited in Stears & Khan, 2002) estimate that marital violence and abuse is prevalent in one in every two marriages. Bradbury (1998, as cited in Stears & Khan, 2002), postulates that alcohol and drug abuse is often a facilitator of most common marital problems such as constant arguments, sexual dissatisfaction, communication problems and financial disagreements. Bradbury (1998, as cited is Stears & Khan, 2002), further argues that alcoholics have rates of separation and divorce four to eight times higher than the rates in the general population of married couples.

With regards to drug abuse, Kaestner, Yamaguchi, and Kandel (1997, as cited in Stears & Khan, 2002), agree that illicit drug users are more likely to experience marital breakdown problems as it increases their uncertainty about the expected gains from marriage. A good example of this can be drawn from Tagwira's *The Uncertainty of Hope*, when the author remarks:

> Gari loomed in the doorway and walked into the cramped sitting room with an unsteady gait. He brought with him the heavy odour of stale beer and whiff of a nauseatingly sweet perfume. The nicotine-stained fingers of his right hand were curled possessively around the slender neck a brown bottle of castle beer. (Tagwira, 2006, p. 8)

As can be observed from what is said in the quote, the reader may imagine that there is a strong association between alcohol abuse and marital breakdown.

Scholars such as Amato et al. (2003, as cited in Mbwirire, 2017) demonstrate that premarital cohabitation is linked with lower levels of marital happiness and higher danger of divorce. Orbuch et al. (2002, as cited in Mbwirire, 2017), believe that premarital cohabitation is more common among couples with lower education levels, and couples reporting parental divorce or separation. Moreover, premarital cohabitation and divorce apply equally in Christians and non-Christians who

have been in more than one cohabitating relationship. Teachman (2003, as cited in Mbwirire, 2017) notes that premarital cohabitation was not linked with an increased danger of divorce when it was restricted to the future spouse. So all that has been presented so far, provides enlightened views and wide perspectives into premarital cohabitation and the role it plays within marriage in African literature.

2.2.11.6 Pre-marital sex, sexual dysfunctions and marital dissatisfaction

Abdissa, Addisie, and Seifu (2015) define pre-marital sex as, "any sexual activity with an opposite sex partner or with same sex partner before he or she has started a marriage life" (p. 1). The expression is usually used to refer to the intercourse before a marriage. Abdissa et al. (2015) focused on Sub Saharan Africa and prove that several studies in Sub Saharan Africa, have also documented high and increasing pre-marital sexual activities among young people. Critics such as Forste and Tranfer (1996, as cited in Stears & Khan, 2002) hold that the contention that cohabitation and premarital sex exposes poor marital partners and subsequently improves marital stability, is increasingly being contested. Likewise, Wu (1995, as cited in Stears & Khan, 2002), confirms that there is considerable empirical evidence suggesting that premarital sex is associated with lower marital stability, leading to breakdown. In the same vein, Bruderl et al. (1999, as cited in Omage, 2013) agree with Wu (1995) that couples who cohabited before marriage exhibit a higher risk of failure and divorce. Becker et al. (1977), Becker (1991) and Bruderl et al. (1999, as cited in Omage, 2013), reject Wu's (1995) claim by arguing that the widely accepted trial marriage hypothesis maintains that premarital cohabitation reduces the risk of divorce as the partners can subject themselves to test if they are compatible.

According to Mbwirire (2017), premarital cohabitation in Christian churches is increasing. Even though it is known that the members involved are Christians, they are not forbidden from being members of a church. Mostly, such so called 'married couples' would not marry or marry and divorce early because such 'a couple' would be not yet be willing to settle permanently. Mbwirire (2017) further asserts that, "some church members indicated that marital cohabitation was and is increasing because of people fleeing from their actual marriages because of varied reasons, settling temporarily in an extramarital affair without denouncing the Christian status" (pp. 67- 68). Again, all church leaders indicated that premarital cohabitation poses a great challenge to their duties as they do not have a mandate not to unwelcome them, yet such relationships have challenges which

are difficult to resolve formally (Mbwirire, 2017). Mbwirire (2017) also argues that, due the nature of problems associated with marital cohabitation, church leaders admitted that couples who live together before marriage appear to have a much higher chance of divorce if they decide to marry at a later stage.

Furthermore, the high risk is higher for those who live together with more than one partner, or settling temporarily in an extramarital affair. Some only live together with one partner whom they later marry and such couples do not seem to be at greater risk for divorce. Therefore, premarital cohabitation increases risks for divorce and goes against many Christian values. It is however in some instances considered to be a good way for partners to get to know each other better and arrange for marriage (Mbwirire, 2017). Overall, premarital cohabitation is viewed as one of the prominent factors contributing to marital divorce.

Chen et al. (2013) refer to sexual dysfunction as "difficulties that occur during the sexual response cycle that prevent the individual from experiencing satisfaction from sexual activity" (p. 2). It is not an easy task to estimate the prevalence of couples' sexual dysfunction since the definition and diagnostic criteria are still controversial and subject to development.

Sexual dissatisfaction is often viewed as a critical contributor to failed marriages due to the observed fact that when there has been a decrease in sexual attraction or desire in a marriage it is a danger signal (Tikumah, 2009, as cited in Omage, 2013). In this case, the issue of sexual dissatisfaction is seen as a factor influencing marriage failure, and it is often considered a stronger problem than childlessness as it could lead to sexual dishonesty among spouses, which in turn can result in extra-marital affairs, bigamy and polygyny (Tikumah, 2009, as cited in Omage, 2013).

Mbwirire (2017) postulates that sexual problems were a challenge to a large number of Christian marriages and non-Christian as well, across all age groups. What is more, sexual challenges emanate as a result of early ejaculation, less intimacy, stress, the 'uncleanliness' of sex in Christian life, infidelity and low erection. However, some church members attributed sexual challenges to the failure by couples to make sexual adjustments especially young couples. The majority of church members also indicated that a number of couples find it difficult to discuss and express openly to their partners how they feel about their sex life (Mbwirire, 2017). Moreover, church leaders concurred with church members that sexual challenges were one of the challenges affecting

modern day marriages than before. Arnold (2002, as cited in Mbwirire, 2017) posits that sexual problems occur in about 45% of the couples looking for marriage counselling.

According to several studies such as Amato et al. (1996) and De Vaus et al. (2003, as cited in Mbwirire, 2017), sex is indispensable during marriage but the majority of Christian couples have sex at least once a week, even after a decade of marriage. Amato et al. (1996) indicate that when making love, women mainly enjoyed the intercourse, while men enjoyed a variety of sexual activities. Furthermore, women connect love with sex more than men do. Given this fact, apparently being adulterous does not mean as much to men as to women. Again, Arnold (2002) accentuates that men have been adulterous more often than women. However, this does not mean men were unhappy with their wives. "When women become adulterous, however, generally it is not for a short period because women are more likely to get emotionally and physically involved" (Arnold, 2002, as cited in Mbwirire, 2017, p. 67). The evidence presented in this section suggests that sexual challenges are some of the critical issues that may contribute to matrimonial disintegration in Africa if not properly addressed.

2.2.11.7 Childlessness: A perceived contributing factor to marriage breakdown

Childlessness is considered a critical issue in marriage failures as barren couples may become unhappy with their union. A notable example can be drawn from Nigeria where women are often blamed, even though medically men may be contributing to childlessness (Tikumah, 2009, as cited in Omage, 2013). Moreover, Vicent-Osaghae (2007, as cited in Omage, 2013, p. 329) notes that, "…generally in Nigeria and particularly Benin City, children are accorded a priceless worth since procreation is perceived to be the essence of marriage, hence childlessness is viewed as a calamity and a curse". Additionally, Monach (1993, as cited in Stears & Khan, 2002) expound that infertility amongst couples, no matter how strong their relationship is, is known to cause significant marital stress. Monach (1993) further asserts that infertility problems are often associated with unresolved psychological problems.

Aldous (1996, as cited in Stears & Khan, 2002) observes that despite advancements in medicine, many couples, after months and sometimes years of enduring efforts, still fail to conceive. As a result, this leads to frustration followed by what is termed an 'infertility syndrome' characterised by denial, self-blame, communication difficulties between couples, anger and depression. Such feelings often become the basis of other problems within the marital relationship, namely drinking,

extra-marital affairs and personality problems (Aldous, 1996, as cited in Stears & Khan, 2002). Again, a further problem experienced by infertile couples is social stigma (Aldous, 1996, as cited in Stears & Khan, 2002). Infertile couples often feel embarrassed at disclosing to others that they have no children or that they have fertility problems. Combined, these studies outline possible consequences of childlessness or infertility has on marital relationships.

2.2.11.8 Arranged marriages

Africans regard marriage as a very significant institution and most families place a very high value to it (Afric Editorial, 2019). In the entire process, parents had the final say with regards to whom their children marry. Moreover, parental acceptance is seen as very crucial as customs and beliefs held parental blessings a key to a successful marriage. It was assumed that marrying without the consent of parents would invite a curse to the couples. Eishelman, (1997, as cited in Stears & Khan, 2002), posits that in many societies, an arranged marriage is still the norm and practice. Marriage exists primarily to fulfil social and economic needs. Consequently, divorce is practically unknown or occurs only infrequently. Strikingly, previous studies failed to deal with the issue regarding the extent to which arranged marriages contribute to marital breakdown (Stears & Khan, 2002). Therefore, this study becomes a fruitful avenue for future research in that direction.

2.2.12 In-law problems and difficulties pertinent to marriage breakdown

Critics such as Bell (1966), Broderick (1979) and Goode (1964), as cited in Stears and Khan (2002) observe that the relationship between marital breakdown and difficulties with in-laws, both patrilineal and matrilineal has been widely researched in earlier family studies. In-laws' problems emerge when the couple does not always move away from the control and influence of their parents. Mbwirire (2017) reveals that a case study data gathered indicated that, for a long time, the Shona people do not consider family as just the immediate, but the extended. For such reason western concept of dividing the family into immediate and extended poses challenges to modern marriages than in the past. Informants indicated that whether a son is married or not, he is an important member in the family and community at large. The roles of the son were (and still are) to look after the parents and the siblings as well. Besides this, once the son is married, these roles would infer with the new marriage life causing problems.

Some informants opined that on the other hand, in-laws 'demand' and expect too much from their sons and daughters, forgetting that they also have needs to fulfil in their lives (Mbwirire, 2017). Furthermore, the demands of in-laws would be used to attack and diminish the son or daughter concerned. In-law demands come from both the husband's and wife's sides. Being married to a poor family was one of the serious challenges which in-laws find difficult to accept. Almost all informants indicated that in most cases, in-laws from either side interfere because of barrenness. Serovich and Price (1994, as cited in Stears & Khan, 2002) observe that couples living closer to in-laws were more likely to experience disagreement and poor quality relationships. In brief, in-laws' problems or difficulties are some of the critical matters that may cause marital conflicts and eventually breakdown.

2.3 Theoretical Framework(s)

The African marriage theme is proposed as theoretical basis for understanding African marital relationships knowledge or experience from different perspectives. The framework is construed from a combination of two approaches to the study of marriage. The two approaches are Nego-Feminism (Nnaemeka, 2004) and Masculinity (Connell, 1997). Nego-Feminism as explained by Nnaemeka (2004) as the theory that focuses on the foundation of shared values, that in many African cultures are principles of negotiation, give and take, compromise, and balance. Here, negotiation has double meaning of "give and take or exchange" and "cope with successfully or go around" (Nnaemeka, 2004, p. 378). Connell (1997) defines Masculinity as a concept which is derived from gender as a social construct based on patterns and practices associated with the position of men in any society's set of gender relation. Moreover, masculinity can be described as the cultural variations of gender roles, seeking to demonstrate the fluidity of gender and primacy of cultural organisation (Mutunda, 2009, as cited in Zhuwarara, 2016, p. 18). The combination of these two theories can best inform this study on the grounds that, in order to accommodate the characteristics of African society which are unique and differ due to its cultural, political historical and social backgrounds as well, other masculinities and feminisms are peculiar to their place of origin. Again, the application of these theories differs from setting to setting and also from one person to the next.

2.3.1 Nego-Feminism

The study employed Nego-Feminism or "negotiated feminism" which is inspired by the Igbo/African women's experience and it argues that, "the theology of nearness grounded in the indigenous installs feminism in Africa as performance and an altruistic act" (Nnaemeka, 2004, as cited in Butau, 2019, p. 378). Nnaemeka (2004) notes that 'negotiation' within African feminism means "give and take or exchange and cope with successfully or go around". This implies that, African feminism has its peculiar principles to deal with negative elements in patriarchal society through compromise and negotiations based on the shared values in many African cultures.

Nego-Feminism theory is regarded as the shorthand of gender complementary possibilities engulfing issues of peace, conflict management and amicable resolution, negotiation, complementary give and take, and collaboration (Nnaemeka, 2004). Nego-Feminism becomes a guide in dealing with feminist struggles that occur on the continent and it considers the implications of patriarchal traditions and customs, and it aims to dismantle and negotiate these critical aspects, and these principles shed light to the presentation of characters in the selected novels. From another perspective, Nnaemeka (2004) metaphorically argues that, "the idea of 'no ego' knows when, where and how to detonate patriarchal landmines, it also knows when to and where and how to go around patriarchal landmines" (p. 378). This foregrounds on the idea of how Nego-Feminism paves ways of negotiating with or negotiating around patriarchy in different contexts. In other words, Nego-Feminism knows when, where, and how to negotiate with or around patriarchy in different situations.

According to Steady (1987, as cited in Nnaemeka, 2004) the negotiations that are made at the level of gender and language are rooted in the indigenous as well. African patterns of feminism can be seen as having developed within a context that views human life from a total, rather than a dichotomous and exclusive perspective. Steady (1987, as cited in Nnaemeka, 2004) argues that:

> For women, the male is not 'the other' part but of the human same. Each gender constitutes the critical half that makes the human whole. Neither sex is totally complete in itself. Each has and needs a complement, despite the possession of unique features of its own. (p. 380)

In addition, Nego-Feminism in Africa is living those legacies in theory, practice, and policy matters. African women's engagement still nurtures the compromise and hopefulness to build a harmonious society (Breines, 1996, as cited in Nnaemeka, 2004).

2.3.2 Masculinity

Masculinity is another theory that informed this study. According to Connell (1997), "Masculinity" is a concept derived from gender as a social construct based on patterns and practices associated with the position of man in any society's construct of gender relations. In a recent review, a 'usual' conceptualisation of Hegemonic Masculinity is described as a set of values, established by men in power that functions to include and exclude, and to organize society in gender unequal ways. It combines several features: a hierarchy of masculinities, differential access among men to power over women and other men, and the interplay between men's identity, men's ideals, interactions, and patriarchy (Jewkes & Morrell, 2012, as cited in Jewkes et al., 2015).

Connell (1998) claims that the term 'Masculinity' encompasses different forms or ways in which and individual can be 'masculine', the societally dominant form of which is known as 'hegemonic masculinity.' The main purpose of Hegemonic Masculinity is to perpetuate the patriarchy, legitimate the dominant position of men in society, and keep women subordinated. For this to be accomplished, the contentions of masculinity views should be rejected and exist in opposition to femininity.

As a theory, Masculinity provides a historical and theoretical framework to understanding gendered societies, and for that reason it is best suited to the current study. Morrell, Jewkes, and Lindegger (2012, as cited in Jewkes et al., 2015), contend that, "the relationship between gender norms, social collectives and the individual is complex, with each impacting on the other, with different force and effects at different times" (p. 5). Hegemonic Masculinity has been largely utilised as a social structural concept to explain the legitimisation of masculinities through social institutions and social groups (Morrell et al., 2012). To add on, Matzopoulos et al. (2014, as cited in Jewkes et al., 2015) observe that another understanding of 'Hegemonic Masculinity' that has been debated and examined is that it is a problem, not only for women, but also for men. The system that keeps men in a collective dominant position over women and in competitive relations to other men comes at a cost for men in terms of their health and quality of life. Connell (2012, as cited in Morrell et al., 2015), posits that, faced with an ideal where physical resilience is valorised,

men find it harder to seek for healthcare and engage in preventive activities. The impact is most clearly seen in countries like South Africa which evince high levels of mortality from violence and chronic diseases.

According to Hearn et al. (2012, as cited in Jewkes et al., 2015), patriarchy was shaped in relation to racial inequalities, traditional social structures and economic disparities, and these were key intersectional features of the gender order. By contrast, Sweden has a strong history of state interventions such as the provision of paternity leave though aspects of gender inequality, including violence, certainly persist. National differences meant that the interventions undertaken by NGOs that have been highlighted above shared both similarities and differences. In South Africa for example, gender interventions with men historically focused on two major problems – violence and HIV transmission. In Sweden, violence has also been a major focus, but other key interventions have focused on fatherhood related aspects of domestic life and labour. South African interventions on the other hand have diversified to include work on more enduring issues, such as fatherhood, unemployment, and many of the interventions had short-term goals – reducing gender-based violence, reducing HIV transmission – with longer – term goals of transforming gender norms behaviours (Hearn et al., 2012, as cited in Jewkes et al., 2015).

2.4 Gap identified and direction

From the antecedent analysis, the gaps identified in the research area are as following:

- Researchers (Katjavivi, 2002; Ogbeide, 2013; Okeke, 2015) carried out intuitive researches by focusing on critical issues that lead to marriage failure in African fiction one of which is *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu of Oshaantu* (2001), focusing mainly on marital instability, abusive husbands, infidelity, witchcrafts, communication breakdown, divorce and so on. The present research grew from these issues of marital instability and dysfunctional by looking further into another perspective which has received little or no primary attention, which is the possibility of prototypical and archetypical marriages where marital satisfaction despite some challenges seem to be found and such analysis is framed within both Nego-Feminism and Masculinity.
- On the other hand, writers such as, Mlambo (2015) explore the critical issues in *The Uncertainty of Hope* (2006), such as women in a patriarchal society, resilience, and pragmatic morality. The current study expands further on the critical dimension, which was

missing in the available literature, by providing a holistic and balanced analysis of the presentation of marriage. Furthermore, various studies have just emphasised on marital instability and marital dysfunction and not much on the possibility of marital stability and marital function a gap the current research sought to fill.

2.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter, provided a discussion of related literature. It reviewed the corpus of pre-existing scholarship that shares affinities with the current research in order to identify the gap for the present research. Issues such as the concept of marriage in Africa, marriage and gender roles in the African setting, re/presentation of marriage in African fiction, marital dysfunctional, marital in/stability and marital dis/satisfaction from African perspectives, forms of marriages in some African cultures, types of marriages, the perceived causes of marital dis/satisfaction and breakdown and how they affect marital relationships are thus, discussed extensively. The research gap emanating from the review of the corpus of scholarship was also noted and identified in the chapter. The chapter also provided a discussion of the major theoretical explications of the two theories that couch the current study – Nego-Feminism and Masculinity - and how the two theories can be amalgamated and employed in better analysing and examining the major concerns for the current study. The next Chapter (Chapter 3) explains the methodology adopted and used for the current study.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter (Chapter 2) focused on discussing the theoretical framework and literature review. This current study is explanatory, relying heavily on the qualitative approach. This chapter (Chapter 3) delineates the methodology and considers aspects such as the approach and design, population and sample as well as data analysis and ethical considerations.

3.2 Approach and design

This study adopted a qualitative approach as the research method to analyse the re/presentation of marital relationships in the two selected fictional imaginaries. According to Creswell (2009), qualitative research is a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribed to a social or human problem or situation. Naturally, the innate or inherent relationship that exists between a woman and a man in a marital relationship might not be diminished to numbers, therefore, the qualitative approach was the most appropriate approach for this study.

The qualitative methods in the current study facilitated the gathering of narratives and lived experiences related to marital relationship system and more so, with regard to and as manifested in marriage. The research design was mainly descriptive and involved a survey of concerns relating to marital relationships' such as attitudes, experiences, values, opinions of couples and outlook about marriage. The qualitative approach is indispensable in this case for it provides form and direction for this research. Thus, "a research design is the arrangement of the conditions for collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose" (Kothari, 2004). The research purpose is defined as the ability to find the answers for the research questions raised and the research design is a plan that explicates how, when, and where data are to be gathered and examined.

Masson (2002) foregrounded two features of qualitative research design that firstly, it is interpretative, implying that it is concerned with the understanding and interpretation of the social world. Secondly, it is "both flexible and sensitive to the social context in which data are produced" (Masson, 2002, p. 3). This can be distinguished from the fixed and systematised methods of the

quantitative research where standard models are designed for every study by employing laid out formulas.

In addition, the qualitative approach is based on arguments and interpretations aimed at understanding the complex nature of the social world within a specific context. Kothari (2004) contends that, "the qualitative approach to research is concerned with the subjective assessment of attitudes, opinions and behaviour" (p. 5). This implies that the researcher is the principal data gathering instrument whose function is to investigate the issues under study and then communicate the data in the form of words. This enables the researcher to conduct an inductive analysis of data extracted from a variety of sources - analyse and draw conclusions from the data.

The qualitative approach was used on the basis that it is interpretive in nature and attempts at understanding the qualities of social life, as well as its inherent quality to provide an in-depth textual explication in the social context of the characters' interactions within marital relationship in the texts *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* (2001) and *The Uncertainty of Hope* (2006). Since there was no fieldwork carried out, the study was a desktop one.

3.3 Population

The population was all Southern African novels that deal marriage from an African perspective as a thematic concern. These Southern African literary texts should contain aspects pertaining to the re/presentation of marriage, and are written in English. Creswell (2008) defines a research population as "a group of individuals who comprise the same characteristics" (p. 9). In addition, Bhatacherjee (2012, as cited in Kandemiri, 2018, p. 54) defines a population as, "all people or items (units of analysis) with the characteristic that one wishes to study." In light of these definitions, the population of this study is thus, all Southern African literary imaginaries that provide re/presentations of marriage and are written in English.

3.4 Sample

Purposive sampling was used in this study as the researcher purposefully selected the two texts, *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* (2001) and *The Uncertainty of Hope* (2008) from the total population as the texts that were bound by common attributes - of focusing on the re/presentation of marriage, s sharing the same setting (Africa), as well as featuring marital relationships as a prominent theme in the. Ary et al. (2014) define sampling as, "the small group that is observed or

a portion of a population" (p. 161). The critical conceptualisations of marriage were common in both texts, thus, the texts were considered similar from a thematic perspective, and in a manner that assisted the study and researcher to accomplish the set research objectives.

3.5 Procedure

The study was a desktop study where data were gathered through an intense reading and critical analysis of the chosen novels, *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* (2001) and *The Uncertainty of Hope* (2006). The researcher considered relevant secondary sources including works by literary critics, book reviews, journals, scholars' research papers, academic presentations as well as any other relevant sources on marriage such as web pages. The amalgamation of these sources facilitated a close and critical analysis of this study's objectives. In addition, the sources complemented the analysis and provided a backbone upon which this study was hinged. The selected novels were analysed by applying the Nego-Feminism and Masculinity theories that formed the theoretical framework of this study, and were also informed by the reviewed literature, and culminated in informed findings and judgements for the conclusions.

3.6 Data analysis

Data analysis is the interpretation and exposition of the data collected for the study (Anderson, 2013). The study employed thematic and content analysis in the interpretation of the re/presentation of marriage in the African literary works. Kothari (2004) postulates that, "content analysis consists of analysing the contents of documentary materials such as magazines, newspapers and the content of all other verbal materials which can either be spoken or printed" (p. 110). Data gathered were organised into smaller chunks by categories for easier management, and in the process themes and relationships between categories emerged. The interpretation of data was done by employing both Nego-Feminism and Masculinity theories. The data were then presented in narrative form, and categorised according to themes. The findings were thus extracted from the interpretations and analysis, and they were used in the formulations of discussions and conclusions.

3.7 Research ethics

This study was based on fictional works whose characters are of an imaginative nature. Thus, it did not involve human participants, but written material that is already available in the public

domain and the researcher considered not ridiculing the authors. The researcher strove to be objective by analysing the chosen texts couched within Nego-Feminism and Masculinity theories, as well as by reporting different perspectives and contrary findings as presented in the chosen texts.

3.8 Summary

This chapter (Chapter 3), majorly reflected on the qualitative research design that was chosen to gather data. In addition, it focused mainly on the procedures that were used in the compilation of this research and the sample for this study were specified. Again, the considerations of research ethics were noted, that included and impelled the researcher not to ridicule the authors of the selected texts or sample for this study. The next chapter (Chapter 4) focuses mainly on the in-depth and critical analysis of *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* (2001) and *The Uncertainty of Hope* (2006) bound by Nego-Feminism as well as Masculinity as frameworks, as well as informed by the reviewed literature.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF REPRESENTATIONS OF MARRIAGE IN *THE PURPLE VIOLET OF OSHAANTU* AND *THE UNCERTAINTY OF HOPE*

4.1 Introduction

The previous three chapters provided the background to the study, introduced and provided an overview of how this study has been carried out and the number of novels sampled. The three chapters also delved into some of the literature that provided insights into this study as well as presenting the conceptual framework and methodology employed in this study. In this Chapter, (Chapter 4), the selected novels *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* (2001) and *The Uncertainty of Hope* (2006) are analysed, discussed, interpreted in a thematic format discursively with the literature reviewed in Chapter 2 of this study and through the theoretical lenses of both Nego-Feminism and Masculinity theories. Sub-headings are utilised in order to focus precisely on different themes and a summary of each novel is provided first before embarking on the analysis of the novels. Thus, this chapter examines how marriage is portrayed by integrating the objectives of the study in the analysis. The presentation, analysis and interpretation are guided by the objectives of the study.

The analyses in this chapter sought to respond to the following research objectives as set out in Chapter 1, which were to:

- Explore the ways in which marriage is portrayed in the two novels, *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* (2001) by Neshai Andreas and *The Uncertainty of Hope* (2006) by Valerie Tagwira;
- Examine the representation of marital stability and quality in the two selected texts; and
- Interrogate the causes of marital dissatisfaction and breakdown in the two selected novels.

The analyses in the chapter are presented in a two-fold manner. For each novel, a brief summary is given in the first section of its analysis followed by a critical analysis of it focused specifically on the re/presentations of marriage. *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* (2001) is first to be analysed in the first section of the chapter. In this analysis, the summary of the novel is firstly given. Thereafter a section that analyses the ambivalent and paradoxical presentation of marriage, the versions of marriages that are characterised by marital conflicts, marital dis/satisfaction, un/healthy

marriages, the impact of marital outcomes and the impact of transactions and marital strengths in the text, which are critical issues examined in this study follows. In the second analysis section, the summary of the novel, *The Uncertainty of Hope* (2006) is given. Thereafter the text is critically analysed for the theme of marriage from different perspectives, such as marital in/stability, marital conflict and dysfunctional/functional marriage characterised by intimate partners violence and abuse from male partner and marital relationship quality in its multiple dimensions as presented in the novel.

4.2 *The Purple of Violet of Oshaantu* (2001) – Summary

The Purple Violet of Oshaantu (2001) is a story based on the unique friendship between two women, Mee Ali and Kauna. Both women find themselves in the village of Oshaantu, situated in the Northern part of Namibia through matrimonial relationship. Mee Ali is older than Kauna who is a young woman and has young children. The fact that both women are non-natives in the village of Oshaantu glues them into a vital and reliable friendship, which traverses over years. The personal account of these two women is set during the post-apartheid epoch in Namibia where the HIV and AIDS pandemic and domestic violence are evidently prevalent in the village of Oshaantu.

The novel opens with Mee Ali expressing her gratitude, satisfaction and glorifying "mother" (in this case, symbolically representing nature) because she, (mother-nature), has provided them with sufficient food in their village of Oshaantu. One would argue that, the author's purpose to open the narration of the story with mother – nature, might be to emblemise the importance of nature to the existence and survival human beings.

Usually, in Oshiwambo tradition, the responsibility for the general business of the homestead namely, looking after the homestead and bringing up the children is the responsibility of women and thus, rests on the shoulders of women as most men work in distant areas from their homesteads. Therefore, the standards of living for women residing in the villages depends very much on the land and above all on the rainfall, especially in the Namibia (and Southern African setting by extension) where most rural dwelling are agro-based and most dwellers are subsistence farmers.

Young Kauna is married to Shange and she got married to him during the season when the purple violets are in bloom in the village of Oshaantu, and because of that significant event, as well as her beauty when she arrives as a young wife, she was regarded as "the purple violet of Oshaantu".

The beauty does not last long, as Shange, Kauna's husband begins to abuse her and subject her to an endless nightmare. Again, to make things worse, Kauna struggles to conceive a child immediately after they got married. This results in her turning into an object of ridicule from her in-laws. Mee Ali, who has been married in the village first, is the only friend Kauna has and at the same time is a person who strives to intervene and give assistance to Kauna in all the suffering she undergoes at the hands of her abusive husband, Shange and his family. Moreover, another older woman is the only person who confronts Shange directly and lashes out at him and this brings his physical battering of Kauna to an end. Even so, the emotional abuse continues. Mee Maita, and other church elders in the village of Oshaantu, seem to be indifferent to Kauna's problems nor do they attempt to intervene and stop Shange's unruly behaviour because spousal abuse is traditionally regarded as a private matter. Shange does not conceal his extra-marital activities nor does Kauna hide her husband's abuse. Consequently, the entire villages of Oshaantu knows that Kauna does not have a caring and loving husband, but rather she, is entrapped in a loveless matrimonial relationship. Kauna had abandoned Shange three times and returned to her parents. However, Shange brings her back home promising her family that he would stop ill-treating her. Shange makes sure, in every possible way, that Kauna does not enjoy any form of happiness.

To exemplify, Kauna is not given her own free cooking space for a long period. Hence, she is compelled to share the hearthstone with other women in Shange's father's compound. In contrast to Kauna's marriage, Mee Ali rejoices in a peaceful and loving marriage with her husband, Michael, who works far away and returns home occasionally, but is supportive of his wife whenever he is home. Because of Mee Ali's loving and peaceful marriage, Mee Ali's in-laws are prompted to imagine that, Ali has bewitched their son. On the one hand, there are also other men, who are good husbands and are supportive of their wives in the village and these include, Victor, Peetu, Mukwankala's husband, Kauna's father, Tate Oiva and Tate Fillipusa and so forth.

Earlier in the story, the reader encounters the principal characters. However, there are other women characters who emerged as the story develops, such as Sustera (a local nurse who, always extends a helping hand to Mee Ali in nursing Kauna's bruises), Mee Maita (a church elder, who is only interested more in Mee Ali rather than young Kauna's predicament), Mee Fenni (Kauna's aunt who is divorced from an abusive husband) and Mukwankala (the woman who dares to disciple and call Shange to order).

Kauna's troubles escalate when Shange dies in his home after having been to the 'White house.' Kauna is immediately suspected of having poisoned him, especially because Shange has been abusing her. Also, Kauna worsens the suspicion by defying the prescribed traditional behaviour for a widow - giving a moving speech on the circumstance in which Shange died and shedding of tears over her dead husband's body. The poor Kauna is stripped of everything she has worked for by her husband's family who take over her homestead and everything in it. Kauna leaves a destitute, with only her children. She however has a regenerated spirit to restart over again. The summary provides an overall insights to the reader about the novel under examination.

4.2.1 Marital instability: Violence and injustices in *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu*

The novel opens through the novelist's narrative voice. Mee Ali, a married mother in the rural subsistence farming village of Oshaantu is tending to the business of her homestead alone. The readers might wonder or question the absence of her husband. The reader may assume that Andreas deliberately omitted the presence of Mee Ali's husband, Michael in order to offer the society a didactic lecture through Andreas' carefully crafted character and narrator, Ali, that in most cases many men are away from the village during most of the colonial years and were in cities and towns as migrant workers. For that reason, Michael is not with his wife, Mee Ali to partake in the routine homestead business. This is evidenced through the exchange of greetings between the characters of Mee Maita, the elder woman and one of the church leaders in Oshaantu and Ali, the principal story narrator: "And how is Tate Michael? Have you heard anything from him lately?' 'Yes, we received a letter from him last month. It came with one of the Kapendas' sons" (Andreas, 2001, p. 2).

As is the practice in most cases for the women in the aforementioned village, Oshaantu, Ali tends to the routine homestead chores alone as her husband, Michael, is away most of the time because of economic reasons – working in the mines. In other words, Michael is at work as a miner, just like most other men from the same village. Mee Ali's next-door neighbour, Mee Kauna, a young housewife and mother, is physically subjected to continuous abuse by her miner husband, Shange. Both women, Mee Ali and Mee Kauna do not originally hail from Oshaantu. For such reason, Mee Ali is Kauna's neighbour and older than her. By traditional virtue, Mee Ali is viewed as Kauna's 'small mother.'

Furthermore, Kauna's marriage is one continuous hellish nightmare. At the beginning of the marital relationship, Kauna is regarded as beautiful - as the purple violet that grows and flourishes in Oshaantu village. Her beauty however, soon diminishes and eventually vanishes after a series of battering and abuse by her husband, Shange. Furthermore, the fearless Mukwankala describes Kauna's current facial state as something that looks as if it has been through some strange incisions made by a clan from outer space. A sense of caring and loving husband is lacking in this marriage and this is demonstrated in the novel through the following quote: "For some marriage turns out to be a loveless entrapment. While for others, marriage is a one miserable long-life experience" (Andreas, 2001, p. 4). Taking a cue from this quote, and if a careful scrutiny is considered and the readers immerse themselves and internalise what Andreas brings to the fore through such expressions, the readers would realise that, what Andreas articulates is verisimilitudes within our society. In other words, what Andreas portrays in the novel reflects the reality that happens in the society today. Thus, literature is viewed as the mirror of the society.

As the novel progresses, Mee Ali, the narrator tells the readers that Kauna's husband, Shange was a heap of contradiction who was nice to some people, arrogant to others and usually mean to his own wife. Notorious for infidelity in the village, even his children have become used to his regular beatings of their mother, as the oldest of them, Kandiwapa always treats her mother's bruises each time her father beats her. This aspect is expressed when Andreas (2001) states:

> He started to fume and couldn't wait for Kauna to return from the well. Then it all happened so fast. Kauna and her basket full of water landed on the ground. Kauna tried to escape Shange's rage, but he was too fast for her. He caught her. She screamed. I have never heard her screaming like that before. (p. 58)

What the narrator notes is a corroboration of Coleman and Cressey's (1990, as cited in Stears & Khan, 2002) observation that marital violence and abuse is prevalent in one in every two marriages. Often the typical pattern of marital violence graduates from kicking, slapping and punching to severe burns, fractures, internal injuries, miscarriages and attempted strangulations and drowning.

Furthermore, through the portrayal of the character of the abusive Shange, Andreas (2001) intends to demonstrate how Hegemonic Masculinity manifests itself by persisting and how is sustained through traditional systems that seeks to silence women and close any avenues to their empowerment. This view is supported by Connell (1997) who contests that masculinity is a

concept derived from gender as a social contract based on patterns and practices associated with the position of men in any society's gander relations matrix. Connell (1997) further reiterates that the purpose of Hegemonic Masculinity is to perpetuate the patriarchy, legitimate the dominant position of men in society, and keep women subordinated. Essentially, the novel is about Kauna and Shange as narrated by her elder friend, Mee Ali. Albeit there are elders and church leaders in Oshaantu such as Mee Maita and others who seem not to be interested in intervening in Kauna's marital problems as this was traditionally viewed as a private matter. Mee Maita's lack of interest in Kauna's marriage problems is evidently shown when Mee Ali asserts: "It was obvious that she was not interested in talking about Kauna's marriage" (Andreas, 2001, p. 8). Through the character of Mee Maita, Andreas teaches society the lesson that, as human beings, it is of great importance to extend a helping hand to others when they are in troubles.

Again, on the one occasion, however, the beating of Kauna becomes too much and unbearable for the children to handle. Shange gets upset that his wife has discovered the nature of his work as a cook in the mines as evinced in the photograph given to his wife by her friend, Ali. For this reason, Shange beats the living daylights out of his wife. Kauna's suffering and humiliation at the hands of Shange goes unabated. Kauna's suffering and humiliation is explained by the quotation hereafter:

> Kauna was lying on the ground covered in a blanket of sand. She moved like old clothes as Shange's shoes struck her mercilessly all over her tiny body. The heavy mine shoes sounded her as if they were breaking every bone. She had covered her face and part of her head with both arms and hands (Andreas, 2001, p. 58)

On one occasion, Michael comes to Kauna's rescue. After Michael has managed to bring Shange's murderous tantrum under control, the reader is shown the pathetic image of the helpless Kauna. The reader learns that, Kauna has blood mixed with sand all over her face, in her mouth, nose, eyes, ears head and clothes, and of the sight of her children crying helplessly. Besides, Andreas' presentation of masculinity is illustrated in that Shange does not only emotionally abuse his family, but denies his family the benefits of his financial gain. Instead, he built a house for his girlfriend, where he spends most of his time, while Kauna, the legitimate wife and her children, dwell in an ordinary hut. This means that Shange has created for himself other financial obligations towards his mistress, at the expense of this family. As a result, such financial obligations diminish his

participation in the economic needs of his own family. It is ironic that in most African societies, a man is viewed as the sole breadwinner. Shange as a man and above all, a family man for that matter, fails to take care and support his family as expected. As a provider, and a fundamental figure from which a family evolves, he is a failure. This position established here is confirmed in *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* (2001):

> I feel angry every time I see Shange behaving like that towards his wife… He is often seen with her at the *cuca* shop belonging to his friend, the local teacher, Mr Jackson. Shange has built her a two-roomed blockhouse. Since then his wife, Kauna and I have nicknamed her the woman from the 'white house.' (Andreas, 2001, p. 3)

As Truhe (1998, as cited in Stears & Khan, 2002) expounds, the discovery of an ex-marital affair is known to bring about a crisis between the spouses and their families and interferes with a person's ability to function effectively. Shange's actions are a clear testament of how matrimonial conflicts begin and may eventually lead to a series of problems.

Based on Andreas' (2001) portrayal of Kauna's abusive husband through the character of Shange, it evokes the reader to question how many Shanges are out there in the Namibian society. The reader is also jostled to question how many Kaunas are being subjected to such forms of patriarchal violence and injustices among the society. Hence, through issues like marriage, extra-marital affairs, divorce, widowhood, reproductive rights, religion, inheritance and economic status of women, the author reviews a traditional system that subjects women under hegemonic masculinity and characterised by a suppression of opportunities for women towards self- empowerment.

Earlier in the narrative, the reader is told that the church leaders in Oshaantu village were indifferent to Kauna's marital problems as marriage problems were regarded as private matters and that traditional divorce was not condoned. However, Mukwankala, who is popularly known as the champion for the subjugated women in the village makes spousal abuse a public matter by selecting 'Cuca shop', a public platform often visited by men, to confront Shange thereby compelling the men in her society to confront and rethink their traditionally authorised role as bullies. Her attention to Shange's physical strength which she uses to question his masculinity is revealed when she says, "… tell me how many men you have beaten in this village the way you beat your wife? … Men who beat women are the ones who cannot stand up against other men"

(Andreas, 2001, p. 63). Like magic, Shange's humiliation under the spiteful tongue of Mukwankala stops him from physically beating Kauna again.

Even though Shange ceases physically abusing Kauna, he continues to assert his domineering attitude over her by deciding when she is permitted to pay courtesy call to her family and continues with his extramarital affairs. Shange does not implicitly stop his abuse of her, though he only switches to a different form of abuse – emotional abuse. To exemplify this, he virtually spends all his free time with the other girl in the 'white house' whom he has built a modern house for, only to come home to bully Kauna, Shange emotionally abuses his legitimate wife. Remarkable evidence is shown in *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* (2001) when the narrator complains, "Shange does not even bother to conceal his relationship. His car is often seen in broad daylight parked in front of the "white house." I turn to Mee Maita, who…" (Andreas, 2001, p. 3). Andreas' presentation of the motif of the 'white house' is an eye-catching experience to the reader. Moreover, the author tells all the Namibian and African men that building 'white houses' is a wrong and ill path to take. In other words, Andreas does not only single out the wrong deeds of Shange, but Shange is just a representation of those men who indulge in such practices.

The reader further learns that Shange hardly sleeps at home but satisfies his sexual desires very often outside, leaving his wife high and dry. This is a form of sexual abuse. If Kauna was not a Christian and disciplined woman, she would probably have been forced by the stern circumstances she encounters to seek a warm embrace in the bosom of another man. Also, the reader is informed through the novelists mouth piece, Mee Ali, that just like other male anti-feminist in the village of Oshaantu are not at ease when it comes to the economic empowerment of women, Shange is neither immune to discouraging Kauna from acquiring and owning livestock of her own. This can be viewed as a form of financial abuse in itself, which is rooted in patriarchal wisdom that prevails in the village in question, Oshaantu, that "a wealthy bride is not good for a husband's ego." This can be substantiated by the following quote in which the narrator asserts that, "I don't think Kauna has lost anything yet. She did not have many animals. May be a few… I think Shange discouraged her from owning animals" (Andreas, 2001, p. 41).

Observing that manner in which Shange is upset by the constant beating of his wife without what can be called concrete or justifiable and empirical evidence, one is more than convinced that love is obviously not the purpose Shange married Kauna. Kauna herself tells the reader that Shange's

real reason for marrying her when she confides in her friend Mee Ali one day that, "I was a daughter of a pastor and a teacher, a high school girl and a virgin. I was perfect for him. It was more for his ego than anything else" (Andreas, 2001, p. 23). Again, Shange's rage and cruel treatment towards his wife may prompt thoughts in the mind of the reader that Shange did not marry Kauna out of love but for his selfish ego –manipulation. He has absolutely no respect or even regard for her feelings. Shange falls into the category of men who exert their so -called masculinity on helpless women as Mukwankala rightly puts it, "Kauna cannot walk among other women with her head uplifted and straight and it is all because of you. Are you not ashamed of yourself?" (Andreas, 2001, p. 63). The manner in which Shange mistreats and humiliates his wife reminds the reader of Okwonko in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958) when Okwonko beats his wife severely during the week of peace, during which period according to the goddess, no men is supposed to beat his wife. This claim can be reinforced through the instance when the narrator says:

> And when he returned, he beat her very heavily. In his anger he had forgotten that it was the Week of Peace. His first two wives ran out in great alarm pleading with him that it was the sacred week. (Achebe, 1958, p. 21)

Such actions are confirmation of Connell's (1998) Hegemonic Masculinity at display as he explained that the main purpose of hegemonic masculinity is to perpetuate the patriarchy, legitimate the dominant position of men in society and keep women subordinated. In addition, Shange has turned Kauna into an object of public ridicule and laugher in the entire village. The women laugh at her for not being able to hold on to her husband whereas the men see Shange's behaviour as 'normal.' What a hegemonic masculinity at play!

On the other hand, a man who does not abuse his wife, like all other men, Michael, Ali's husband, is viewed to be under his wife's jurisdiction and therefore weak and not a full man as per Hegemonic Masculinity, which Connell and Messerchmidt (2005) contend that in most African traditional societies is prevalent and that it embodies the current most honoured way of being a man. It requires all other men to position themselves in relation to it, and it is ideologically legitimated by the global subordination of women to men. It entails that men are superior to women and should submit to them. This concept creates a stereotypical behaviour of men - authoritative, aggressive, heterosexual, competitive and physically brave. It is a concept that gives more power

to the male figure and any man can benefit from these patriarchal dividends. Moreover, in the African traditional society, more often than not, the men exploit this status-quo.

As the events unfold, the reader becomes aware of differing views on marriage. Ironically, even Michael himself does not see anything unusual in the malignant beatings that Kauna has to endure as Michael refers to them as nothing but marriage problems. In fact, like several other men in the community, Michael views domestic violence as private matter as well as a normal part of most marriages. In tandem with men, the local women (with the exception of Mee Ali and Mukwankala), believe that domestic violence is a part of marriage. Mee Maita for example, believes that far from being an enjoyable haven, marriage should be one miserable life long experience. *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* (2001) can be seen as a means of challenging such views of marriage as harboured by Mee Maita when Mee Ali opines that, "No, Mee Maita, marriage doesn't need to be a miserable thing. I am not saying there will be no problems, but you always make it sound as if marriage was a funeral" (Andreas, 2001, p. 4)

Furthermore, even though Mee Maita and several men in the community consider the abuse of spouses (women to be precise) as a private matter, Mee Ali firmly objects this warped qualification of marriage, stating that, "marriage doesn't need to be a miserable thing" (Andreas, 2001, p. 4). Mee Maita is a veritable ambassador of the local culture's passive acceptance of the abuse of women. Nevertheless, the gossiping Maita is not alone. For even Kauna's mother insists that Shange is the man God has given to her daughter as husband and so she must accept him as he is. Based on Kauna's mother's reasoning, one may argue that, if the Genesis account of creation in the Bible says that the Almighty God Himself solemnised the first marriage in human history, then how is it possible for the same God to give Kauna an abusive man who might kill her. Based on different views with regard to marital relationships, Andreas, through her well thought and crafted characters in the novel, tells the reader that people have different opinions on how marriage should and should not be.

As one might expect, the nurses in the hospital are not always sympathetic to battered local women. Such view becomes observable when the Mee Ali observes:

> I visited Kauna at the hospital as often as I could. The nurses were not always sympathetic. In our presence they would talk about how village women get beaten up by their husbands and how they lie to the doctors, saying that some cows had kicked them in their faces while

> they were milking; and that treating these women was a waste of time because they always return worse. (Andreas, 2001, p. 61)

Andreas' text is an astute delineation of a society in which exploitation and abuse of women has become normalised - partly by women themselves, for the novel is by no means an 'anti-male' text lacking in nuance in its delineation of gender matters. An issue central to the text is what one might term the practice of 'wife-blame' especially by the women's in-laws who here in this novel, as in so many African societies, exercise major control over the lives of their in-laws. Mbwirire (2017) agrees with this assumption by attesting that, in-laws 'demand' and expect too much from their sons and daughters, forgetting that they have also needs to fulfil in their lives.

Furthermore, black women learn early in their social development to deny the sexism to which they are subjected. They are in an unusual predicament. One would concur with Ogbeide (2013) who holds that, often by the time a black girl become mature by reaching adolescence, the expectation that relationships with men will be harsh, oppressive and intense has been imprinted in her mind. The abuse and habitual oppression of black women may lead to a subconscious attitude that is called 'internalised oppression,' an almost tacit acceptance that they, as women, will be subjected to a two-fold mistreatment by both society and black men – and a concept akin to the Stockholm syndrome.

Shange's clan does not also seem to assist the unenviable course of the woman as they lessen the severity of Shange's abuse by claiming that he is neither a perfect man nor that he is not immune to err like any other human being. Thus, soaked in the fast fading practice of patriarchy, the community and even the local church are both unsympathetic to Kauna's suffering. In fact, they do not even acknowledge her suffering, let alone think of how to help her.

Little wonder, that when Shange suddenly drops dead rumour had it that his wife, Kauna must have poisoned him to death. Indeed, in patriarchal settings that prevail in the text, Andreas tells the society that the gloom realities the women have to contend leave them with very few choices. This is the reason why many local women would rather hide their husband-inflicted bruises and scars with brown shoe polish despite the untold physical and emotional pains they have to endure. The reader learns that one morning Shange suddenly dies, after he returned home from an engagement with his mistress, the woman from the 'white house,' as Kauna and Ali affectionately called it. The details indicated above can be justified by Andreas (2001), when she laments, "The

children were crying and Kauna was hysterical. She stood beside the fresh marks left by her husband's car screaming and shouting, her arms flying everywhere about her" (p. 10). This incident evokes uncountable thoughts that raise a number of questions in the mind of the reader. For example, what does the future hold for Kauna and her children? Whether Kauna would be able to answer all questions related to the cause of her husband's, Shange among others.

Like Nyathi in *The Other Presence* (2011), Andreas (2001) espouses the beliefs, attitudes and viewpoints of African village people on the concept of death - their underlying belief that in African traditional set-ups, there is not death that occurs innocently. Behind every death, there is some form of mysterious work by either a sorcerer or a spell. In the same vein, the villagers suspect Kauna to have bewitched her husband. Not only the villagers do, but also Shange's relatives. Apart from Kauna being suspected of having poisoned her husband, the readers are also made aware that Mee Sara, Michael's sister whose husband dies from HIV related illnesses, but she, Mee Sara was falsely accused of having bewitched her husband. This finding supports the author's views with regard to witchcraft expressed in *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* (2001) when Andreas observes that:

> When Victor dies, his relatives went to see the Great *Ngaanga**, from the River, well known as the 'all-wise' and 'all knowing,' to find out who had bewitched Victor. The Great *Ngaanga** suddenly opened his eyes, "It was the wife! Mee Sara bewitched her husband." (Andreas, 2001, p. 103)

These beliefs and attitudes reinforce the African philosophical concept of death that there is no innocent death. It goes without saying, that Andreas (2001) is warning society to desist from such false beliefs and attitude towards death embedded within the African concept of death and that lack of knowledge might mislead the society and lead them into resorting to wrong actions, which may have long-lasting percussions on the nature of relationships within the society. Additionally, sometimes the table turns and the man becomes the victims of spousal abuse. This is however rare. Joshua, Kauna's big uncle is regularly beaten up by his wife. He tries to cover up this shame by being the strict uncle whenever he visits his relatives. On the whole analysis, the author's decision to narrate these stories against the backdrops of Ali and Kauna's friendship and Kauna's story of widowhood woefully results in narrative underdevelopment of the characters Kauna and Mee Ali, and also their relationship. Several of such stories are recounted through flashbacks that ultimately

disrupt the flow as well as the chronological narrative of Shange's burial and Kauna's widowhood too.

4.2.2 Ramifications of spousal abuse

Spousal abuse is one of the motifs in Andreas' *The Purple Violent of Oshaantu* (2001) and the narrative is centred on this theme (spousal abuse). Hence, the researcher deemed it very imperative to undertake an examination of the ramifications of spousal abuse and digest it further in order to have a better understanding of some of the consequences. Earlier in the text, the reader learns with shock about the bruises, broken bones, head injuries, and bleeding which are some of the consequences of intimate partner abuse. This finding corroborates the ideas espoused by Andreas (2001) when she notes, "When Kaunas was discharged from the hospital, a friend of Mukwankala brought her brown shoe polish to apply to her face, It is good for the inside bruises and scars" (p. 64).

In many cases, medical attention and hospitalisation follow patterns of physical abuse. Very often, pregnant victims of physical spousal abuse are exposed to miscarriage, pre-term labour and injuries to, or the death of the foetus.

Similarly, Stears and Khan (2002) submit that, "often the typical pattern of matrimonial violence graduates from kicking, slapping and punching to severe burns, fractures, internal injuries, miscarriages and attempted strangulations-a continuation and de-liberate pattern of intimidation and control" (p. 446). Therefore, many of these victims become either psychological or emotional wrecks as they battle with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), which they experience for a long time. Additionally to depression, victims also go through long-term anxiety and panic.

Admittedly, in *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu*, almost every married woman bears bruises and/or scars, which they attempt unsuccessfully to hide by covering them with brown shoe polish. These victims usually lie to the doctor when they go for treatment to hide their shame and embarrassment. They have become so desensitised to the extent that they now reason that being beaten by their partners is a part of marital relationship. Throughout the course of the text, the reader becomes aware that it seems that anybody, however, who is not subjected to beating or humiliation such as Mee Ali is only 'lucky' in their own estimation. The above estimation is authenticated in *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu*: "Michael must love you… Now this. Oh, he doesn't beat you? You are

lucky. I am really tired of it at all. Yes, Michael is a good man and I am grateful for that. I just don't know what people want me to do. Kneel down at his feet and…" (Andreas, 2001, p. 65). For those women who are constantly subjected to abuse, marriage has become a loveless entrapment that must be endured.

Strikingly, much of the violence against women especially rape and wife beating goes unreported due to the silence of the victims and their families. One would assume that the failure to report such violence to the organisations that deal with human right abuses could be based of two factors - these women might be ashamed of embarrassment, which might lead to them being divorced by their husbands, something which, according to traditional values, is regarded as a taboo. In other words, divorce is almost a taboo in many African societies and this accounts for the high degree of tolerance by women. The author verifies this societal perception of divorce by remarking that:

> Your mother will certainly not approve of you wanting to divorce your husband, because when I divorced, she was angry with me. She gave me a long lecture that marriages are not easy and what did I expect, bla, bla, bla. She claimed that I embarrassed her, our parents and the rest of the clan. (Andreas, 2001, p. 66)

The second and the last might be the fear of the unknown ramifications of their actions. Noteworthy is that pain is an emotion that cannot be measured quantitatively. This sense of having being immeasurable is what Andreas (2001) explicates, and the reader is made aware that some of the bold and fearless women of Oshaantu, having been beaten, mistreated and even pushed to the wall of frustration, insults and demoralisation defy tradition by divorcing their husbands. When Mee Fennie for instance divorces her husband, the village people, including her own next of kin show their open defiance of her breaking of a supposed community convention, predict her downfall and starvation. Such prediction might be regarded as an assertion of Tagwira's assumption when she states that, "Always remember that a women cannot raise a good family without a man by her side…" (Tagwira, 2006, p. 7). Even though the Oshaantu community predicted Mee Fennie's deposition, Mee Fennie becomes the sole financier of her children's education and their upkeep without making any u-turn to her former husband for assistance. Similarly, Mee Nangula, Jacop's wife, will take no insults and economic abuse and humiliation from her husband and his relatives and she decides to divorce her husband does well for herself. Contrary, it is actually her husband who goes through an economic quagmire.

Because she is the daughter of a pastor, as well as the fact that she is entirely dependent on her husband, Kauna comes to the decision that she cannot divorce Shange. Hence, she instead defies tradition by making no secret of her suffering, like many of the village women who silently suffered abuse at the hands of their husbands. Although the Oshaantu villagers are fast to suspect Kauna's for poisoning her husband and/or for witchcraft when her husband dies, she does not care. In fact, her husband's physical, financial and emotional abuse of her seems to have hardened and converted her into an emotionless wife who, contrary to convention, will not shed even a single tear for her husband nor make a tribute speech for him during the funeral. Despite all this, she is defiant and vocal about her endless nightmare. As corroboration to the aforementioned assertion, Andreas (2001) notes, "You are not going to kill me and I am not crazy. I am serious. There will be no speech on behalf of the widow" (p. 138). Noteworthy is that agony is an emotion that cannot be measured quantitatively and that this sense of pain being immeasurable is what Andreas attempts to articulate, and as such the reader is made to immerse themselves in Mee Kauna's shoes and feel her psychological and physical sorrow and pain. Therefore, the reader is made to imagine and register the extent of Kauna's pain and sorrow through Andreas' (2001) recounting of her continuous suffering in her marriage. In brief, through the characters of Fennie and Nangula, Andreas (2001) aims at re-educating society that, despite the existence of those women who stay in abusive relationships due to various reasons, there are those who are brave - those who can stand up for their rights.

4.2.3 Functional marriage

Even though instability and dysfunctional marriages have been one of the motifs or rather dominant theme in the novel, genuine partnership in marriage or marital stability and functional relationships feature in the novel.

> Why are people suspicious about a loving husband? What is strange about a good father? What is evil about a man who does not abuse his woman and children? These are the questions I have asked Kauna and myself on numerous occasions; usually we don't find answers. (Andreas, 2001, p. 5)

The above quotation draws attention to the issue that generally in African society, if a man does not abuse his wife and children, he is not considered a real man. This belief or philosophy may be a manifestation of the role of hegemonic masculinity which is rooted in the concept of total

authoritarian, control and violence of men towards women and wives. Given this assumption, the reader may be tempted to imagine that Andreas (2001) wants to inform the reader that despite the general proliferation of dysfunctional marriages and abusive husbands in the text, it does not imply that there are no caring husbands and satisfying marital relationships as well.

As much as the author depicts numerous men as unfaithful husbands, womanisers, shameless, irresponsible fathers, absentees from home or drunkards and so forth, Andreas draws a remarkable backdrop of the image of a good man or husband. Thus, drawing us to the centre of the research gap, which is the versions of relationships that are characterised by marital satisfaction, healthy marriages, the impact of marital outcomes and the impact of transactions and marital strengths, which are critical issues explored in this study. It is against such a disposition of unattractive male statistics, that Andreas (2001) presents Michael, Mee Ali's husband, as the very opposite of such men. The tragic torment of women in *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* (2001) may engage both the reader and the critic, yet Andreas (2001) does not downplay the presentation of a different type of masculine behaviour. A man who behaves differently from the expected hegemonic masculinity, Michael is always a subject of ridicule as he is regarded as lacking authority or has been bewitched by his wife. The above claim is evident in the text as the author states, "You said your mother in-law accused you of bewitching her son?" she asked (Andreas, 2001, p. 25).

Michael and Mee Ali's marriage is an exemplification of functional and satisfying marriage. Moreover, Michael and Mee Ali's marriage is strikingly the opposite of Shange and Kauna's marital relationship, which is dysfunctional - characterised by cheating and all other imaginable forms of abuse. Andrea's (2001) portrayal of Michael sticks out as a thumb for he is different from the rest of the men as represented by Shange, Victor and Namutenya. It is for this reason that the author juxtaposes Mee Ali and Kauna for the reader to take cognisance of distinct breed of masculinity that Michael represents. Michael's family considered him as having broken every rule within the patriarchal setting or society as far as his marriage to Mee Ali is concerned.

Mee Ali is the daughter of a divorcee, and in a traditional African society like the Oshaantu village, children brought up by single mothers are not regarded highly in terms of moral values. This finding is rationalised by observations made in the literature review chapter of the current study when it is observed that, "most parents identified and arranged a spouse who is believed to from a respectable family" (Afric Editorial, 2019 p. 1). Obviously, this may imply that, since Ali has been

raised by a divorced mother, she does not meet their (Michael's family) convictions. This view is also confirmed in *The Uncertainty of Hope* (2006) when Tagwira asserts that, "Always remember that a woman cannot raise a good family without a man by her side…" (p. 7). This possibly implies that, the mother is regarded as a wobbly because a woman's position and identity is solely recognised when she is attached to a man. As literature is regarded as the mirror of any society, the Andreas' (2001) message is doctrinal in the sense that she articulates and exposes aspects of verisimilitude. In another term, she speaks about what happens in the real world. If, for example, a survey is taken for many African societies, it might evoke numerous questions, such as; how many women's identities are not recognised just because there is no manhood attachment? A good example of the belittling of women can be drawn from the Oshiwambo community where, when a husband and wife live in homestead their house is called '*egumbo*' (house). Nevertheless, when the wife passes on, the word house remains the same '*egumbo*' (house). On the contrary, when the husband passes on, the word '*egumbo*' (house) changes to '*okagumbo*' (literary meaning 'small house'). So the word becomes diminutive. In brief, for a woman's identity to be recognised there is a social condition attached - which is that she should be anchored on a man.

Over and above that, Ali's mother fails to follow Oshiwambo traditional etiquette when her daughter fell pregnant. Instead of assigning a delegation, she brought her, herself. One can imagine the impression she made on Michael's family for performing such an unheard of and unacceptable procedure. To make the matter worse, Mee Ali and Michael gave birth to their first child out of wedlock, a behaviour that is associated with 'bad girls' who are perceived to be ill mannered and indulge in inappropriate acts. This is actually a disgraceful act and the blame lies with the girl's family. Therefore, Michaels's mother called or labels her (Me Ali) a 'whore' and doubts the paternity of their first-born son. In other words, Michael's mother and family doubt whether Michael is the real father of Mee Ali's first-born son. Again, Mee Ali mother's uncustomary deportment adds fuel to fire, hence, Michael's mother is unaccommodating of both her and Mee Ali. Yet despite all these, Michael protects his wife to be by stating that, "I am sorry if you don't like her. I love her and she is the woman I am going to marry" (Andreas, 2001, p. 17). In presenting Michael to the readers, Andreas (2001) is making a powerful statement that there are still good men out there and marriage is not always necessarily entrapment for the woman.

Furthermore, Michael's, sister and other relatives are appalled by Michael's stance and conclude that he has been bewitched, and that explains why he is 'abnormally' in love. Michael is labelled as a coward, but he accepts his culpability and acknowledges his responsibility by not forsaking Mee Ali. Andreas' portrayal of a different form of marital union through the character of Michael towards his wife sends a strong message to society that, there are still good husbands out there who, despite the interference into their conjugal relationships and pressure from their family, do not easily give up and stand firm in doing what they think is right and work for the betterment of their marriages. "My son is headed for trouble and he does not see it. But wait…"Whores always get good men. I swear she has given my brother some mountain *mutakati*. Mother and sisters gossiped about me" (Andreas, 2001, p. 17). In the eyes of Michael's family, Mee Ali is not good enough for Michael because of her background (having been raised by a single mother considered by the family as morally deviant) and the fact that she does not hail from the village of Oshaantu.

In some traditional African set-ups, parents direct their sons to marry from families they know for the fear that they may marry into bad families of witches or prostitutes. Hence, in Zimbabwean Shona culture there is a proverb that says '*rooranai vematongo*', which literally means marry from the same village. This finding observed in this study mirror that of Afric Editorial (2019) which contests that, "in Cameroon where tribalism is still strong when it comes to marriage, parents will arrange a marriage for their children to marry within the same ethnic, religious, social, and cultural backgrounds" (p. 2).

In addition, Andreas (2001) presents Michael as a man of his own words who is prepared and willing to defy his parents' and relatives' wishes in order to honour his marital obligations to his wife. As a result, Mee Ali does not endure any psychological and emotional torture when she elopes to live with Michael before they get married. When Michael defines boundaries between his marriage and the extended family, Mee Ali is shielded from all the gossips about her falling pregnant out of wedlock. He has an "uncompromising attitude to right and wrong" (Andreas, 2001 p. 169). Michael detaches himself from the tradition and societal expectations and does what is right by his wife. Michael demonstrates his entire commitment to the woman he loves and disregards his families' wishes. Michael's decision to stand by his wife has far-reaching consequences on the relationship between his wife and his mother and it culminates in numerous

years of them not being on good terms with each other. Thus, Michael redefies masculinity and what it means to be a 'man' and a 'husband'. He defines what society expects of him.

> Kauna. You shared your in-laws' kitchen for an entire year and lived in their homestead for two and half years. Two and a half years! But you talk like someone who stayed that long with those people. They would have absolutely suffocated you! (Andreas, 2001, p. 19)

Here, Andreas seeks to educate Namibian society, especially those living in the villages like Oshaantu, that the homestead and the kitchen emblemise a successful marriage, for they become the focus of a power struggle between in-laws and daughters' in-laws. The present findings in this study with regard to in-laws' problems are also confirmed by Serovich and Price (1994, as cited in Stears & Khan, 2002), who explain that couples living closer to in-laws were more likely to experience disagreement and poor relationship quality. Moreover, it may be difficult for two women to share the same cooking space without stepping on each other's toes. This might be one of the reasons why Michael quickly builds his wife a kitchen and provides her with her own homestead. Consequently, he, maintains peace and harmony between his wife and mother in order to avoid unnecessary confrontation - a confrontation already been ignited by the fact that Mee Ali is regarded as an unsuitable daughter in-law by Michael's mother. Michael is quite aware of how to manage both his mother and his wife in order to create a conducive and peaceful environment for his wife and children, and as a result, the Biblical allusion of his name becomes a reality, as he is gentle and temperate and is the protector of his wife and children – like the biblical angel Michael who is considered a protector.

The fundamental attribute of Michael and Mee Ali's marital relationship and its distance from violence, is a manifestation of Nnaemeka's (2004) theory of Nego-Femenism, which Michael uses as an approach to resolve any disagreement when Mee Ali tries to help Kauna through appealing to the church elder and the story spiralled out of control, Michael asks her not to get involved. On another occasion, Michael begs his wife not to confront his parents after they used vulgar language towards her or have said bad things behind Kauna's back. Even though Michael was angry with his wife, he does not use violence to silence his wife, but appeals to her emotions, intellect and understanding. This behaviour is in line with observations by Gichinga (2007, as cited in in Mburu, 2018, p. 15), that, "matrimonial happiness is the balance between good and bad marriage." In this

case, neither does Michael feel less of a man to shout at or hit his wife in order to get the desired results. From the onset, Michael is portrayed as a good man and loving husband who makes a covenant to himself. “I promise myself that I would not allow any family member or friend to ruin my marriage” (Andreas, 2001, p. 180). The above assertion draws attention to the issue of a trustworthy husband like Michael, who unlike other husbands who give in because of the pressure from their families and turn against their wives, does not and instead stands firm on his convictions.

Furthermore, the author through the character of Michael manifests a more balanced view of fair and equal partnerships that should exist between men and women in marriage set ups. Michael is well awake to that marriage in only meant for two key players - a husband and a wife. Consequently, there is no room for a family member or a friend to dictate what happens in such a union. Michael is not entrenched in patriarchal values, which would make him dominate over Mee Ali. To challenge the world one needs people who can help; and in any society, the coordinated efforts of both men and women have the proclivity to transform society. Michael keeps in touch with his wife and does not abandon her, even when he is away from the village because of work. Mee Ali confesses to this when she reveals that he had written to her, “Yes, we received a letter from him last month. It came with one of the Kapendas’ sons”. From the above quote the reader can realise that Michael is depicted as a good husband to his wife for he does not abandon her even when he work very far away from home, where there must possibly be women workers too and other forms of temptations, but his commitment is his wife. Michael comes home when he can and whenever he is at home the reader can actually feel the closeness between the couple for they sit and converse for hours even if his visit is for a short period of time. Moreover, to magnify the loving relationship between these two, the author paints a very romantic image of the couple “He stretches his hands out to me. I held onto it as I stood up. He put his arms around my waist and felt the beads around it, which sent a thrill through my body” (Andreas, 2002, p. 181). The marvelousness and surreal nature of this scene is a contrast of the relationship between Michael and Shange, especially because both men are born and bred in the same village, but Michael decides not to tap into the diabolical patriarchal dividends and instead chooses to be a partner to his wife. In short, there is love, compassion, care and above all understanding between the couple. By ending the story with the exemplary relationship, Andreas seems to foreground that, despite all the negative masculinities the reader has experienced in the text, there are still good men out there – and that marriages can also be very functional.

Again, given the fact that Michael and Mee Ali's children observe the happy and complementary relationship between their parents implies that their perspectives towards marriage will most likely emulate what they have witnessed. Even though Michael, through his characterisation, is depicted as a good and loving husband, this does not imply that there are no other good husbands. Such claim is corroborated in the text through the character of Mukwankala's husband who could advise his sons that women are not meant to be punching bags and as such, he does not beat their mother and also dissuades them from physically abusing women. "I don't want to hear of you beating women. It is a coward who does such thing" (Andreas, 2001, p. 73). So, this affirms the existence of a kind of masculinity that evinces a sense of responsibility and justice in the sense that Mukwankala's husband treats his wife and women who are married to his sons equally, and this type of wisdom is transmitted onto the sons who are the next generation. Although Mukwankala's husband was not a pastor, he was a generous man. By depicting an image of such a good man, the author intends to comment on what is to be a 'real' man who does not have to be influenced by religion in order to treat a woman with candidness, love and respect. Such a form of complementarity is a manifestation of Nego-Feminism as suggested by (Nnaemeka, 2004).

In the same vein, Andreas (2001) portrays another male figure, Kauna's father who is a pastor and a good man. The reader is mindful that of the fact that he, Kauna's father, being a pastor can be construed to mean that, for such reasons, he is a considerate man. As much as he is a man of the cloth, his principles go beyond the biblical teachings as he advised Kauna to abandon Shange if she is not treated well. "Don't think of me, or my work. You must do what you think is best for you" (Andreas, 2001, p. 95). Kauna's father suggests divorce, admittedly, as a pastor he goes against the biblical principles of divorce. Thus, as a father, he proposes a better life for his own daughter whilst Kauna's mother does not approve of divorce because she is a Christian. In short, the reader can deduce that, this is a battle between Christianity and the reality of lived experiences. From this scenario of a crisis, Andreas projects the image of a man that possesses profound love for his daughter, Kauna and refused to be bound by religious convictions that could result in the continued suffering of his daughter. Such type of masculinity is a living example of a good father who values the life of his daughter over religious convictions.

Furthermore, the author demonstrates a concept of ideal, functional and satisfying and fulfilling marital relationships through the almost perfect partnership between Michael and Mee Ali, who

are in give and take form of relationship as proposed by Nnaemeka's (2004) Nego-Feminism theory. The same credit is due to Kauna's father who counsels his daughter to opt for a better life, a stance that evinces his belief in the possibility of a good marriage. In this case, Andreas (2001) criticises hegemonic masculinity by offering a flexible form of masculinity as overtly evinced through the characters of Michael, Mukwankala and Kauna's father. The author exhibits how men and women should no longer continue living as binaries in a society, but instead in a harmonious way in which women are the other half of masculinity and the two genders/sexes are actually inseparable. In this case, motherhood and fatherhood encounter themselves in an embrace that is hard to detach as theorised by Muchemwa and Muponde (2007, as cited in Zhuwarara, 2016).

On the whole, the reader's view is that despite many examples of good marriages in the text, Shange and Kauna's marital relationship, which is portrayed as a dysfunctional marriage, seems to be inundated by exemplary, good, functional and fulfilling marital relationships within the text. But the problem is that Shange and Kauna's marriage is likely to overwhelm all satisfying marriages in the novel. In other words, a lot is said about dysfunctional, dissatisfying marital relationships almost throughout the text. Thus, a critical dimension is missing in the novel, which is the holistic and balanced re/presentation of marriage, which constitutes the gap to be filled by the current study.

4.2.4 Unfaithfulness: Contributing ingredients to marriage breakdown

John et al. (2017) claim that the causes of matrimonial conflicts and breakdown become significant themes that affect every married couple, because in a relationship characterised by intimacy as marriage, some conflicts are anticipated. The intimacy in marriages provides the more likely cause for conflicting views and desires to surface. John et al. (2017) further holds that, naturally no two normal gifted persons need the same things all the time or view issues in accurately the same way. Therefore, these features are not excluded from the matrimonial relations presented in *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* (2001). "Why does he have to come at this time? I don't think he has respect for his wife at all! To do this so publicly!" (Andreas, 2001, p. 3). The above quotation draws the reader to the motif of Shange's unfaithfulness towards his wife. Strangely enough, Shange does not conceal his extramarital relations with the lady from the 'white house.' As Stears and Khan (2002) further observe the causes of marital breakdown are known to be many, and this implies that no single cause is known to predispose a married couple to a point of breaking up. However,

even though Shange's extramarital affair becomes known to his wife, it does not lead to the collapse of their marriage because Kauna does not even consider divorcing her husband, probably because of various reasons such as traditional values, conventions of the patriarchal society and for the sake of her children. Andreas does not portray extramarital affairs through her antagonist character, Shange only, but also depicts it through the character of Tate Oiva, who indulges in extramarital affairs by getting married to a second wife. This concern is expressed by the author when she professes:

> Rumours had it that she did not want to share Tate Oiva with his wife. The herbalist even assured those who paid to her who had bewitched Mee Namutenya that "It was the husband's second wife!" Some of us were very angry with the second wife." (Andreas, 2001, p. 30)

Overall, extramarital relations have the potential to breed numerous problems within marriages which might generate new quandaries in the relationship as can be observed by the reader with regards to Tate Oiva's matrimonial affairs.

4.2.5 In-law problems and difficulties

Apart from unfaithfulness being one of the major causes likely to cause marital disintegration, in-law problems and difficulties cannot be exempted as a cause too, especially in the context of the text under study, *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* (2001). The assumption that in-laws problems and difficulties are possible features of marriage failure is underpinned by Mbwirire (2017) who suggests that the demands of in-laws would be used to attack and diminish the son or daughter in law concerned. In-laws demands emanate from both the husband and wife's side. "You are such a liar. How did Nakusa know you loved this bull? You two did not even talk to each other," Don't call me a liar, don't call me a liar." (Andreas, 2001, p. 40). This quotation, if well scrutinised, is an affirmation that in-laws project their demands and expectations from their sons and daughters in-laws. Again, in-law demands are not only projected during the lifetime of their sons and daughters in-laws but go beyond the grave. That means when one partner dies, especially the husband, the in-laws inherit the properties from sons and daughters. This view is clearly reinforced when Andreas (2001) asserts:

> Why do you want stay here and enjoy Shange's wealth? You didn't even shed a tear for him. Do you think we don't know how you disrespected Shange? Now you want to stay here and behave like a poor widow. You will not stay here and bring other men into Shange's bed. If you think we would allow this, we won't," they told her. (p.166)

This statement provides a testament of how widows and their children are subjected to humiliation once their husband and father respectively, passes away. Furthermore, the same reminds the reader of Onai and her children in *The Uncertainty of Hope (2006),* who were evicted from their home by Gari's brother, Toro after Gari has passed on. This may imply that this practice is not only peculiar to Shange's and Gari's marriages, but might be a feature in many other marriages out there. In view of all that has been presented, Andreas can be argued to provide the reader with important insights into how in-law problems and difficulties might contribute to the breakdown of marriages and the pacification of widows and their poor children beyond the grave of their husband and father, respectively. In the next section, an analysis is made of how Tagwira presents both forms of Masculinity as explained within the precepts of Nego-Feminism and Masculinity theoretic concerns.

4. 3 Marriage in *The Uncertainty of Hope*

4. 3. 1 *The Uncertainty of Hope* (2006) - Summary

The novel explores the survival strategies that are employed by Zimbabwean women at the height of the decade of challenges in Zimbabwe. Tagwira addresses issues such as HIV and AIDS, Operation Murambatsvina (Clean-up trash), retrenchment, gender violence and unemployment. The novel systemises the lives of different women: Onai Moyo (a market dealer), Faith and Melody (who are university students) Katy Nguni (a street vendor and black market dealer), Sheila and Gloria (who are sex workers) and Ruva (a secondary school student). One thing in common with regards to these different women is that they are determined to earn a living in various and diverse ways, despite the shifting social, political and economic environment that they find themselves in during the decade of challenges in Zimbabwe. The story is set around 2005 during the period of the Zimbabwean government-led the removal and obliteration of illegal settlements known as Operation Murambatsvina (Drive out rubbish). The clearance of shacks and many informal settlements led to the displacement of many and is imagined as an attempt by the Mugabe Regimen to remove opposition party, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) supporters from the

cities. As has been indicated, the novel centres on female characters. Their profuse and multiplex lives give insights into the challenges that confront those who try to earn a living in difficult economic circumstances.

The Uncertainty of Hope is set in the overcrowded suburb of Mbare, Harare, and cross-examines the intricate convoluted life of Onai Moyo who is a market woman, mother of three children, and wife to Gari Moyo. Her best friend is Katy Nguni, a vendor and black- market currency dealer who is married to an international truck-driver. Tagwira's story focuses on the women of Mbare. Socially and culturally set-up as dependent on men, even so, they struggle on their own for survival during the odd years of economic and social hardships. The protagonist is Onai Moyo, a kind loyal wife and deeply caring mother of three children. She is faithful to her husband although there is no love between the two. Her husband is very abusive and a womaniser. This is why Katy is prompted to urge her to divorce Gari, "…do you want us to take you out of this house in a coffin?" (Tagwira, 2006, p. 6). However, Onai does not yield to this advice because of her socialisation in a patriarchal society that 'forces' her to imagine this as normal of marriage, and despite her husband reducing her to a mere possession (Chitando, 2015).

The novel begins with Onai, the main character who is unwillingly awakened from her drowsiness and slumber because of the continuous irritating sound of a barking dog in the distance. The novel focuses on the Zimbabwean economic meltdown and the narration revolves around the lives of two women who are best friends, Onai Moyo and Katy Nguni, and how their lives help represent the dimensions of various forms of masculinities. Onai may be seen as a victim of his abusive husband, Gari, through her characterisation in *The Uncertainty of Hope* (2006). Onai is a necessitous market vender married to Gari and is a mother of three children, Ruva, Farai and Rita. Gari has been laid off from work, and has money to drink and not for supporting the family. At the same time she is psychologically and physically abused at every slightest provocation and Gari cheats on her with other women. Onai works arduously by selling vegetables to fend for her children, but she is often hurt by her husband, Gari to the extent that it prompts her to seek assistance from Katy and John, Katy's husband. To make the matter worse, Gari goes to the extent of introducing his girlfriend to his wife and children, and points out that he is going to take a second wife. On the contrary, Katy has a loving husband comparable to Andreas' Michael, John Nguni, who is a long distance truck driver and constantly travels between Zimbabwe and South

Africa. The couple works tirelessly in order to educate their daughter, Faith, who is at the University of Zimbabwe and saving money to build a house in a low density area. Faith, their daughter, is in a steady relationship with a rich and caring young man called Tom.

Apart from these two principal characters at the centre of the story, the author, through her narration and well-crafted and chosen characters, portrays a cross section of the Zimbabwean society whose lives are caught up in a grave situation and are striving to survive after they have lost their main sources of livelihood. Tagwira uncovers the plight of individuals during the peak of inflation in Zimbabwe. Surprisingly, another man, a municipal officer at the municipality offices expects Onai to pay in kind for her house forms to be processed. Even men in high positions are no exception in trying to sexually exploit vulnerable women. A type of sexual behaviour that facilitates the spread of the HIV and AIDS pandemic.

Furthermore, a man called Mawaya is also caught up in the upheaval of the confusion, bitterness and poverty which becomes the order of the day in the lives of Mbare residents. Mawaya is a rich man in disguise trying to appease an annoyed spirit by living a beggary life for a period of time - a Shona practice called '*kutanda botso*.' Onai becomes the sole kind person who can still share the scraps of food she has with a total stranger. A numerous number of Mbare residents are subjected to a situation in which the basic foodstuffs which were already in scarcity before the demolition are now unaffordable. It is a period when the majority of the Zimbabwean population is living below the poverty datum line. It is against such a backdrop that Tagwira's narrative unfolds. Many of her characters are caught up in circumstances in which the line between morality and immorality becomes smudged and obviously many become casualties in the process of trying to survive against all odds (Mlambo, Kangira, & Smit, 2015). It is against such a background that Tagwira portrays a diversity of masculinities playing different roles, in the process unmasking good-loving, and abusive fathers and husbands, lovers and corrupt officials.

4.3.1 Manifestation of hegemonic masculinity and implicit control of females

The following section focuses on the role of Hegemonic Masculinity as a tool for controlling females. At the beginning of the narrative, the reader is introduced to Onai the main character in *The Uncertainty of Hope* (2006), and around who the theme of marriage mostly revolves. Onai, as a married woman and her children have been subjected to a gripping and threatening circumstance when intruders easily invade her house. Both Onai and children are unable to defend and protect

themselves. Instead, they are the ones to hide from the bandits as evidenced in the novel where it reads:

> She wore under her breath at her absent husband. "*Uripiko nbai Gari*? Where are you Gari? Her mind sharp with fear, she realized that she had just a few minutes to spirit her children to relative safety. She move silently and instinctively through the darkness into her daughters' bedroom. Sixteen-year-old Ruva and fifteen-year-old Rita were awake, which was a relief, though not surprising given the clamour that the dogs were still making noise. (Tagwira, 2006, p. 2)

The actions presented above through the characterisation of Onai may just be a testimony of how married women and children are left vulnerable by their husband. Such testimony is also supported by Ayisi (1997, as cited in Ogoma, 2014) who argues that "the family is then the logical outcome of marriage. A family consists of a man, his wife and child or children" (p. 95). Ayisi's (1997 as cited in Ogoma, 2014) assumption evokes more questions in the mind of the reader than answers, in the sense that Gari is a family man, but chooses to stay away from home and his family till late, making his family vulnerable to attack by anyone – including thieves. Gari, as the head of the household is supposed to be the protector of his family. Furthermore, by serendipity, the thugs have their eyes only on valuable things in the house and as such, they took the family's television set. As much as the television set is the only prized possession the poor family has, it could have been worse should the thieves had harboured other sinister intentions such as killing and/or raping the female members of this family – a danger that Gari's absence exposes them to. Moreover, Onai, as a mother, had to provide protection to her children and reassure them after the intruders had left her house. The reader is perplexed regarding the whereabouts of Gari, 'the man of the house.'

Suddenly, the thought is swiftly apprehended when Gari walks in dead drunk, his shirt smeared with lipstick, and smelling of vomit. With that first impression, one can deduce the kind of man Gari is - a drunkard, a cheater and an irresponsible man. Admittedly, Tagwira leaves nothing to imagination, but portrays a clear image of a man who has no knowledge of what it is to be a man. Gari is thus an example of heinous masculinity, just like Shange in *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu (2001).* The type of masculinity presented through the characterisation of Gari is corroborated by Hearn et al. (2012) and Johansson and Klinth (2008, as cited in Jewkes et al., 2015) who observe

that patriarchy was shaped in relation to racial inequalities, traditional social structures and economic disparities, and these were keys intersectional features of the gender order.. In other words, this might be the reason why Gari has the power and right to stay out till later and does whatever he wants to do, hence fulfilling the stereotypical nature of Hegemonic Masculinity as suggested by Connell (1998), as a process that perpetuates the patriarchal, legitimate the dominant position of men in society, and keep women subordinated.

Gari, instead of being ashamed and showing remorse over what has just happened turns on his wife and calls her names, accusing her of having given his television set to her boyfriends. His guilty conscience and psychotic demeanour place him in a defensive mode and he beats his wife, Onai who ends up in hospital. Just like Kauna in *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* (2001), "Her episodic facial bruising and blackened eyes had to be a material for speculation because they all knew precisely what was happening" (Tagwira, 2006, p. 5). Gari's brutal actions towards his wife are a not one-off incident, but a series of barbaric actions which may be the reason why the author used the terminology 'episodic' to reinforce how repetitive Gari abuses Onai at whatever given time and to the extent that people stopped asking her, but accepted it as part of her physical features. While Onai goes through the traumatic episode of burglary, Gari is out drinking alcohol and having a wonderful time with one of his mistresses at a bar. He may be categorised as a husband who has no time or sense to process and comprehend what his family has just gone through because he is in a drunken stupor, or he just does not care. Gari's failure to appreciate the situation and leaving his wife unconscious on the floor demonstrates his negligence as a husband and above all as a father. He is a typical patriarch who prefers to go drinking and womanising, leaving his family with no protection. Similarly, Gari defies the African concept of marriage whose values Mbiti (1969, as cited in Mburu, 2018), highlights by submitting that for Africans, marriage is the focus of existence. Also, Mbiti (1969) expands on this concept by arguing that marriage is the point where all members of a given community meet - the departed, the living and those yet unborn. All dimensions of time meet and the whole drama of history is repeated, renewed and revitalised (Mbiti, 1969, as cited in Mburu, 2018).

Due to Gari's negligence towards the well-being of his family, the neighbours, like Katy and John, (her husband), volunteer themselves to unconditionally assume the responsibility for the well-being of Onai and her children. John and his wife's responsivities towards Onai are revealed when

they transported Onai to hospital. Gari's brutalities is exposed when John yells "He is a brute, abusive, improvident, promiscuous drunk" (Mlambo, Kangira & Smit 2015, p. 48). Moreover, the epigrammatic characterisation in this instance also demonstrates the grotesque side of Hegemonic Masculinity which is presented as abhorrent:

> "It is not as simple as that, Katy. How can I leave in the midst of all this? Where would I go with the children? I wish… I wish…" Her voice wavered and she began to weep again. Katy sat with her on the bed and held her silently. At that moment, there was nothing more she could do or say to alleviate her friend's pain. (Tagwira, 2006, p. 144)

The previous expression through the character of Onai, demonstrates that, as much as Katy advises her friend, Onai to leave Gari many times, Onai's views and her way of looking at marriage are entrenched in the societal patriarchal values, where a woman's respect and value is determined by her marital status. Onai, instead of leaving Gari, is determined to stay in her marriage and single-handedly ensure that she feeds her children, and ensure they are clothed and also receive an education during the most difficult period in the annals of Zimbabwean history as recorded by the author in the text. Apart from the ordeals to which Onai is subjected by her abusive husband, her situation is worsened by the "Drive out Rubbish" exercise conducted by the police as suddenly all forms of vending become illegal, therefore forbidden.

Numerous people who have lost their homes in the operation, which also saw the demolition of alleged 'illegal' housing structures and received international condemnation from most international human rights watchdogs, are housed at the halls and grounds in Mbare district waiting to be repatriated to their villages of origin. These are the regular clients who buy whatever Onai and other vendors sell at the markets. As much as Onai tries to sell behind the police officers' watchful eye, the clean-up session has further undermined the already ailing economy of the informal sector. "People who got arrested were taken to holding cells. So why had they spent on streets cleaning-up?" (Tagwira, 2006, p. 199). In spite of all these circumstances, Onai has to make double, if not triple arduous efforts, to make ends meet as her husband is self-serving and has detached himself from the family. Gari treats his wife and children with contemptuousness which evokes sympathy in the mind of the reader. Gari's barbaric actions make Onai's problems larger than she can carry and more personalised than the economic hardship being experienced by the general Mbare residents.

The person Onai should depend on is actually the source of her crippling physical and emotional plight. To make matters worse, Gari, instead of using the money he earns to support his family, uses it to sustain his extra-marital affairs. The resources and money would have made a difference in his family's well-being. The author therefore exhibits a man whose conscience is implicitly dead, whose sense of responsibility has diminished beyond any reasonable doubt.

Onai engages in a struggle from two different fronts - on the one hand from her abusive marital relationship and on the other, the economic hardship which the general Zimbabwean citizens go through. In other words, she faces problems from all spheres of her life without any leisure. Onai's frustration becomes visible when on one occasion she allowed her children, Fari and Rita, to go and sell on the streets and were arrested by police officers. The police also seem to perpetuate the principles of hegemonic masculinity by sexually abusing the children. The police officers' actions are confirmed when Rita laments, "'He squeezed my breast. He fondled me, Mum'" (Tagwira, 2006, p. 199). Through the character of Onai, Tagwira presents to the reader a classic example of imprudent masculinity. Also, Zimbabwe's economic melt-down and obliteration of the informal settlement aggravate Onai's personal problems. Thus, Tagwira (2006) illustrates a man who imagines that owning a house in which his wife and children dwell is enough and a final contribution to the family. Oddly, the house Gari boasts about, he has not worked for it, but is a family house inherited from his parents. The rest of the responsibilities rest on his wife's shoulders. Ironically, Gari expects a decent meal from Onai including meat in the few instances when he, without shame, decides to eat at home. Instead, he brings a packet of biltong and eats alone without even sharing with his wife or at the least, the youngest child. The above attestation is manifested when the author states that "Do you ever listen to what I say? I've told you many times that our duties are clear-cut. I provide accommodation and you do the rest. Now stop bothering me. I am going out for beer" (Tagwira, 2006, p. 176).

Tagwira portrays Gari as a representative of men who are bigoted and feel that there is no need to invest in the culturally revered institution of marriage. Gari bullies his children whenever he beats his wife. His exasperating character and conduct emits a cold detachment, that of a stranger. As a father, he fails dismally, as he does not offer his children even minimal quality time with him. Ruva is disgusted and annoyed at both parents as she has the task of nursing her mother after the father has hurt her, and the mother for not doing something about her situation. Gari compels his

young daughter to assume the responsibilities of an adult each time he beats her mother. Thus, Gari cheats his children out of their childhood. They have to witness their mother battered by someone who should love her, they nurse their mother to heal after each abuse, and therefore, they are forced to mature quickly before their time. The young children, Rita and Fari, strive to give a helping hand to their mother by selling vegetables but end up being exposed to another form of brutality at the hands of the police as they are arrested. “They looked miserable and exhausted under the soft glow of candlelight. Rita was hysterical. She scratched her knees, sobbing with agitation. “They arrested us,” she cried” (Tagwira, 2006, p.199). On one hand, one may argue that Onai exposes her children to danger by allowing them to sell illegally, while on the other, one might argue that she is compelled by the harsh economic circumstances through which the majority of Mbare residents are going through, which again force her to resort to pragmatic behaviours for the purpose of survival. Therefore, Tagwira (2006) through Gari, uncovers the appalling side of masculinity and the sorrowful consequences it has upon the family and the society at large. Hence, Gari and Shange’s form of masculinity is thus an example of hegemonic masculinity which the society glared at.

Tagwira, just like Andreas, portrays the ordeals and horror of violent masculinities, a notion which is supported by Weiss (2004) who maintains that spousal abuse has solely one motive, which is often to gain and maintain domination and control over the victim. In this case as a couple, Gari controls Onai’s sexuality and she has a minimal say in whatever happens to her. “It was a man’s prerogative to run his household as he wished, with no allegiance to any rules, especially those dictated by a woman” (Tagwira, 2006, p. 121). This is captured through the characterisation of Onai, who engages in an internal monologue when Gari fails to come home for the whole night. While Onai is expecting Gari to return, he is in the arms of the most infamous prostitute, whom he might have infected with HIV. Again, marriage is supposed to be a long life, caring and loving relationship. This view is held by Westermarck (1968, as cited in George et al., 2014, p. 8), who argues that “marriage in Africa is seen as sacred, because it solidifies relationships that enrich communities and nations by bringing forth new lives and new hope”. Contrary to this view, Onai and Gari’s marital relationship has become an endless nightmare. This is because Onai’s problems are multi-dimensional as Gari does not only beat and deny her financial assistance, but he enjoys when his resounding beating has put her in hospital because her absence affords him “sufficient

time" with Gloria, his mistress. By bringing Gloria into his home, Gari is inviting the threat of HIV and AIDS into his family.

The above assumption is enforced by Fox (2014) who identifies sexual concurrency as a potential underlying driver of high HIV and AIDS levels in sub-Sahara Africa. Not only Fox (2014), but Shinana et al. (2004) also demonstrate that, "the risk of HIV in marriage is directly linked to non-use of condoms" (p. 2). Gari introduced the famous concept in Zimbabwe of a 'small house' which is derived from the historical practices of polygamy in which men have senior and junior wives (Christiansen, 2013, as cited in Mutseta, 2016). Most important to note is that Gari remains impervious of why Gloria is ever ready to please him in whatever way. She is mindful that she has contracted HIV and AIDS, and it is obvious that sooner than later she will need a proper place to die in when she becomes ill. On top of that, Gloria is well aware that she will no longer be able to market her body to make a living. For this reason, Gari becomes her comprehensive life cover of sorts, for he has a house and is employed. Because of that reasoning, Gloria steps up a campaign by pressurising Gari to evict his wife and his children in order for the two to commence a new life without any disturbances.

Besides, Gari is absorbed by the way Gloria makes love to him that he fails to see the purpose behind her move. Just as he is blind to that, he has no understanding of why Onai cannot please him in the way a prostitute does, for she is inundated with the slavery of trying to eke out a living in an economic environment which can no longer sustain the informal sector. Certainly, a man is supposed to be the steward, provider and protector of his family. However, with Gari it is the opposite. Gari completely refuses to assist his wife in taking care of his family. His indifference towards his supposed responsibilities towards family and negative attitude are manifested when Tagwira (2006) notes that, "The officer stared at her, openly surprised. He laughed contemptuously. "I really think you need a man for a job like this" (p. 142). As these unbelievable events unfold, the reader becomes heartbroken and empathic towards Onai. Strangely enough, Gari as a father, married and above all as a man was nowhere to be found during his family's time of need. He neglected his wife, his children and his family. Tagwira presents Gari as a kind of irresponsible and abusive man who does not care and is neither ashamed of his evil deeds nor show a little remorse for what his family undergoes daily.

The fact that Onai as a woman, is subjected to constant humiliation and abuse, reminds the reader of Dangarembga's views in *Nervous Conditions* (1998), when she submits that:

> This business of womanhood is a heavy burden she said. How could it not be? Aren't we the ones who bear children? When it is like that you can't just decide today I want to do this, tomorrow I want to do that, the next day I want to be educated! And these days it is worse, with the poverty of blackness on one side and the weight of womanhood on the other. Aiwa! What will help you, my child, is to learn to carry your burns with strength. (p. 16)

The above quote if critically and thoroughly analysed, directs one to conclude that Tagwira's portrayal of Onai's aggravated situation and/or her suffering is nothing more than the affirmation of what Dangarembga (2008) alluded to. Not only has the assertion affirmed what Onai has constantly gone through, but equally what Kauna in *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* undergoes too. Hence, both authors intend to expose the ugly and evil of Hegemonic Masculinity in itself. Thus, the role and main purpose of Hegemonic Masculinity as Connell (1998) claims, is to perpetuate the patriarchy, legitimate the dominant position of men in society, and keep women subordinated. Furthermore, Tagwira depicts a man who has relinquished his responsibilities in order to pursue personal interests which offer him momentary gratification. Gari embarks on a path characterised by self-destructive habits and recklessness which finally claim his life through HIV and AIDS. While Gari finds Gloria attractive than his wife, John (Katy's husband), recognises that Onai is a beautiful woman whose beauty is being worn out by Gari. "What a waste of such beautiful woman…what a terrible waste, he thought to himself" (Tagwira, 2006, p.13). Thus, Gari can be viewed as a man whose behaviour can be compared to that of an animal which always finds the other side of the pasture greener than where it is, and through him the reader can see blind masculinity preying on itself.

Besides, Tagwira also presents ways of negotiating hegemonic masculinity. Gari and Onai's marriage which is already overshadowed with many problem or rather on the edge of collapsing is completely challenged by insinuations of Gari's promiscuity. This union is rooted in the patriarchal value where a woman has no control over her sexuality. The cultural and social norms are facilitating tools that allow Gari to dictate the type of physical relationship they should have. In the similar vein, this demands that Onai as well as her social status are tied to her husband. Like

Brown and Brown (1999) and Melgosa and Melgosa (2011, as cited in Mburu, 2018) observe, sexual intimacy between a married couples is a gift from God, and sexual intercourse is a means of communication at the deepest level. Gari, as a married man is inclined to ignore this view.

Additionally, a man like Gari is unscrupulous as he demonstrates having no shame nor respect towards his wife by accommodating his ex-girlfriend Sheila, who is dying of AIDS in his home as a lodger. Nobody can stop him from demanding his conjugal rights without protection, or he makes the situation worse by forcing himself on Onai. Having love affairs with Sheila who has full blown AIDS is a reminder of Gari's past which means that Gari is aware of his HIV and AIDS status. Moreover, it is not stunning that later he evicts Onai from the house and takes Gloria as his second wife as the text was recorded at a time when HIV/AIDS has become a deadly killer disease in Zimbabwe.

Furthermore, the advent of HIV/AIDS poses a critical challenges and complex problems in different institutions, especially that of marriage. Hence, any human being with common sense would try by all means to distance himself or herself from risky behaviours at any cost, except a man like Gari. Instead, he indulges in and irresponsible romantic relationship with a woman like Gloria who is popularly known as a prostitute and whose former lover is allegedly to have died from AIDS. "Any other woman but Gloria, please!" (Tagwira, 2006, p.125). As Shinana et al. (2004) argue, HIV infection was higher among individuals living in regions with more informal marital concurrency. Gari puts his wife at a higher risk of being infected with HIV/AIDS and eventually possible death. Gari expects his wife's silence and obedience in the face of HIV and AIDS. However, silence, cultural and social norms from a wife become deadly in the times of HIV and AIDS. In this case, Gari punishes his wife, despite the fact that Onai vehemently holds onto high moral values in a marriage as demanded by the traditional norms as enunciated by the older generation.

Given the fact that Onai is determined to stick to the norms, she is trapped between a rock and a hard place, in which on the one hand she want to protect herself from the deadly virus, and on the other she is afraid of 'provoking' her husband by discussing his risky sexual behaviour. Again, "the threat of HIV/AIDS hung over her like a hangman's noose" (Tagwira, 2006, p. 126). In this case, sexual concurrency is a potential underlying driver of high HIV and AIDS infection levels in sub-Sahara Africa as observed by Fox (2014). Onai's sexuality is implicitly controlled and

determined by her husband and any divergence from the norms, leads to violence. The room for any negotiated settlement that paves a way towards safe sex between Gari and Onai is non-existent as violence is the order of the day whenever they are in each other's presence. This scenario is not limited to the couple depicted by Tagwira (2006), but it is a stated fact by some studies such as Shinana et al. (2004) who observe that in rural Zimbabwe, 92% of married women use monogamy or abstinence as a primary means to prevent HIV infection. While these women were taking protective measures by being faithful, the majority of men admitted to casual extramarital relationships, thus increasing the risk of HIV transmission to their spouse. This substantiates the pain and hardship Onai suffers because she is respectfully married to Gari, hence it is a difficult task for her to convince a violent man like her husband who is addicted to toxic masculinity practices to suggest the use of condom.

It is by serendipity that Gari gives in to his wife's demands to use condom and saves Onai from contracting the deadly virus. When Onai persuades her husband to use protection with her, she is trying to find the means of negotiating around the established social norms which defines masculinity when it comes to sex. At this stage, the sexual power which men exercise and enjoy over women – such as decision like when and how to engage in intimate relationship is put to test. It is by sheer perseverance that Onai succeeds in remaining HIV negative while his husband succumbs to the virus. It seems as if the author asserts that Gari reaps what he sows. In other words he gets what was coming his way all along when he dies of AIDS. Gari's attitude towards AIDS can be compared to that a tragic hero or of being suicidal, to the point that it might be suggested that he might be well aware of the fact that he is going to die anyway. Gari is addicted to risky behaviour and is presented as a habitual womaniser.

In addition, Gari is portrayed as a man who is economically handicapped due to the economic melt-down that has brought about hyper-inflation in Zimbabwe. At that juncture, Gari is on the verge of eminent retrenchment from his work as the company he works for is considering relocating to South Africa. Just before he passes on, he had lost his employment. Connell (1997) discerns that a situation where unemployment is skyrocketing, the lack of a rapid job can be obliterating pressure on men who have thrived with expectation of being breadwinners. It is therefore against such background that Gari is presented. Owing to the economic crisis, the challenges which face the Mbare residents at this time are multiplex and people react to such a

situation differently. As a consequence, Gari reacts by resorting to alcohol abuse and womanising at the expense of his own family. Hence, Gari is imagined as a form of malevolent masculinity. Furthermore, Tagwira (2006) depicts an obstinate and failed representative of masculinity who has buckled down under pressure to the point of physically, psychologically and emotionally disengaging from his noble role as a man. Instead, he becomes a vector of spreading AIDS through his careless behaviour, and under the guise of masculinity - being a symbol of strength, power and protection and thus this perspective is deflated to a fallacy.

4.3.2 Masculinity: aA tool for women's economic dependence and exploitation

This section centres on women's economic dependence. Cloete and Mlambo (2014), in their article, *A literary exploration of trauma and resilience* in Tagwira's *The Uncertainty of Hope,* argues that, "resilience, therefore emphasises the strength that the people have, rather than their vulnerability, through exploring the strategies that they exhibit" (p. 93). In this light, the period of Zimbabwe's economic decline showcased by the author has some adverse effects on how masculinities react, hence the various men in the narrative are portrayed as responding in distinct ways. As soon as Zimbabwe undergoes economic challenges, corruption in every form goes on a rampage. For example, a man like Chanda illustrates the same qualities, when he exploits the innocence of a university student, Melody. Poverty and dire need for basic necessities forces a young woman to operate as a 'small house.' Chanda uses poverty as a window of opportunity to indulge in a sexual relationship with Melody as her 'sugar daddy', especially so because his wife is away, working in England. This is not to vindicate Melody's equal participation in such a relationship, but Chanda is supposed to be the grown up in this relationship - especially considering that Melody could be the age of his own daughter.

Tagwira presents a man with no sense of morality and ethical behaviour and who is likely to be unaware of the dangers of AIDS which is threatening the health of the majority of the Zimbabwean population. Chanda takes advantage of Melody's desperation in that she is in need of money for her tuition fees and for her upkeep. By so doing, Chanda has crossed the boundary of moral behaviour, that is to say, what is morally right and what is morally wrong. Owing to that, Tagwira (2006) portrays a man who uses his financial power to get whatever he desires, and he becomes the symbol of the 'big men' during the worst economic crisis in Zimbabwe. Additionally, the male image become an extension of tools for the exploitation of women to the extent of abusing his

official role in government in exchange for sexual favours. Onai is not spared of this social rot and this form Hegemonic Masculinity when she attempts to register for a municipality housing scheme and gets sexually exploited by an official there. “Then his dry lips were crushing hers, his hands groping her lustfully, in the places where she had not been touched in a very long time” (Tagwira, 2006, p. 292).

This is a critical period when people throw caution to the wind and where morality becomes an issue of the past as people focus on trying to survive. In contrast, Onai maintains her high moral grounds and does not fall into the trap of immorality of the kind which deviates people from their cultural practices and which often smudge the line between what is moral and acceptable and what is not. In complementing Onai’s high moral grounds, Tagwira (2006) introduces another female figure whose moral is equally as high as that of Onai’s - Faith, who volunteers herself to advise her friend and school mate, Melody to end her romantic relationship with Chanda, a married man. “I am just happy that you are out of that relationship. It could have been worse” (Tagwira, 2006, p. 173). Even though Melody had rejected her friend’s advice from the beginning, she later realised that her friend was a friend in deed rather than a friend in need and begins regretting having been lured into irresponsible activities because of poverty and money. This is evidenced when Tagwira (2006) notes, “I have never been humiliated in my life as was this afternoon” (p. 172). It is a period in which women become particularly vulnerable to HIV and AIDS because they cannot take charge of their sexuality and are sexually exploited for financial and other social favours. For that reason the spread of the virus was eminent. Even so, the critical element to note is the fact that the author presents masculinity as a source of social ills.

Stating the obvious, the male figures are viewed as misusing their positions as far as power is concerned, as they abuse official resources for personal gains. This exploitative trait is apparent in Assistant Commissioner Nzou who uses state vehicles to transport fuel and smuggled goods. Similarly, he orders juniors to do his private business instead of executing official duties. Tagwira (2006) manifests the manner in which government officials who are supposed to strictly enforce the law and maintain order are busy indulging in illicit activities and black market deals. This unscrupulous behaviour in men is not only common within government officials, but extends to the private sector too, that is to say the family arena. After Gari dies, his brother, Toro goes on the rampage by taking advantage of the Shona traditional practice. Toro moves into the family house

Gari was living in with his wife. He evicts Onai and her children onto the streets, something he could have thought about twice before doing. He demonstrates a cold and calculated attitude towards his brother's children. This is the law of the jungle which is characterised by the survival of the fittest. It is against this background that culturally the young brother of the deceased is expected to take responsibility of the widow and the children's wellbeing. Although Onai receives sympathy and intervention from her sister in-law, Gari's sister in this case, this did not help. The reader is not surprised that it seems that the cruelty runs through the entire Moyo family. Certain values are passed on from one generation to the next and this form of masculine trend of maleness are, exposed and criticised by Tagwira. All in all, what is exemplary and captivating in Tagwira's (2006) presentation of masculinities, is how she also has the good sense of depicting how some men are responsible, caring, considerate, affectionate, and above all, protectors of their households.

4.3.3 Nego-Feminism as complementary to true, caring and loving partners

Tagwira (2006) employs realism, a methodology in writing where literature represents life as it is in the real world. Through Tagwira's novel, literature is portrayed as possessing the dynamic power to communicate openly what society might consider difficult to digest. In this light, Tagwira (2006) employs the marriage of John and Katy as a direct contrast to the distasteful marriage that the protagonist has with Gari (which mirrors the marriage between Michael and the central character, Mee Ali in *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* (2001)). John, being a long distance trucker driver who is more often on the road between Zimbabwe and South Africa places him in an environment for temptation which threatens to lead him into promiscuous behaviour. By virtue of John's job, he is always away from home for very long periods of time. Hence, the author introduces another element which could tempt John to act recklessly. He has easy access to young girls whom he smuggles in his truck into South Africa. Besides, John deals with foreign currency and that could open up opportunities for him to have any woman he fancies. But he does not engage in immoral sexual activities.

The author through her mouthpiece, digs into John's past explain what has made him the man he is. "Sleeping around with prostitute was something he had done at much younger age, well before the advent of AIDS" (Tagwira, 2006, p. 243). The reader is not stunned when John reacts to Katy after she handed condoms to her husband in case he is tempted on his trip as demonstrated by his

reaction, “I am not that kind of man. I don’t sleep around, he replied with dignity” (Tagwira, 2006, p. 243). Had John not been committed to his wife, he would have taken an advantage of the “green light” he has been given by his wife, instead, he takes the condoms for his fellow drivers and most importantly, to make Katy feel more safe. In this case, John’s approach is a manifestation of Nnaemeka’s (2004) Nego-Feminism theory at display. He neither makes an issue out of his wife’s unprecedented behaviour nor does he become emotional and violent. Instead, he demonstrates understanding and consideration.

Furthermore, by employing dramatic irony, the author reveals to the reader a sturdy character in the image of John Nguni. John is a man who knows the significance of making covenants and keeping them, and he is mindful of the fact that momentary amusements are consequential to a deadly end in the face of HIV and AIDS. Here the reader encounters a benevolent masculinity, a type of masculinity that puts his spouse first and invests emotionally into the marriage he shares with his wife. Of course, faithfulness becomes the integral ingredient which cements John and Katy’s marriage. So this creates a very strong sense of family which is also expressed through the kind of a daughter they raise, Faith. Such a perspective is supported by Amato and Booth (1997), Eastman (1989) and Silburn et al. (1996, as cited in Australian Institute of Family Studies, 1999), who observe that strong and stable families are acknowledged to provide the optimum framework for children’s well-being and the foundation for becoming responsible adults. Undoubtedly, evidence of this perspective is visible in Katy and John’s daughter, Faith.

As much as Faith is the only child Katy and John bear, she evinces an ambience of level headedness and does not have a sense of privilege. Faith actually oozes a strong sense of what is right and what is wrong. This becomes evident when she engaged in a confrontation with Tom when she suspects that Tom might have acquired his lucrative farm through subversive means as it is the order of the day. All in all, a strong family is the foundation of a dynamic and strong society, and this admirable family set-up seems to have been shaped by the benevolent masculinity, thus, the type of masculinity is represented by John, who is a loving, caring, responsible and above all, an exemplary father to the family.

4.3.4 Masculinity in a complementary conjugal relationship: Nego-Feminist platform

One of the vital attributes of the masculinity represented by Katy’s husband, John is that of complementarity, which Nnaemeka (2013, as cited in Zhuwarara, 2016) refers to as Nego-

Feminism. Tagwira's (2006) narrative acknowledges John as a man who exists in a complementary partnership with his wife. As much as he is the one who has access to the much needed foreign currency due to the nature of his job which enables him to travel out of Zimbabwe, he gives the money to his wife to run the business by doing commercial exchanges with the Zimbabwean citizens in Harare. Obviously, the degree of morality is often overridden by desperation and dire need, which has left the large part of the population with no other option than embarking on black market activities - what Mlambo et al. (2015) refer to as pragmatic morality. Katy's dealings with the money John brings, in consequence, is complementary to John's efforts. Again, Katy brings food on the table thus supplementing the resources brought by John into the family through selling vegetables. The couple works and directs all efforts towards a specific goal in unison, and that is to educate their daughter, Faith and raising sufficient money to construct a house in a low density residential area. The way John conducts himself and supports his family reminds the reader of Michael in Andreas' *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* (2001), who is a caring husband and looks after his family by sending them presents whenever his colleagues go on leaves. Their marriage also epitomises the manner in which marriage does not necessarily need to be a prison but instead a partnership.

The way John operates in his household is an affirmation of what Nnaemeka (2004) proposes, that African feminism should deal with the negative elements within patriarchal society through compromise and negotiations based on the shared values in many African cultures. Nnaemeka (2004) further argues that Nego-Feminism is viewed as the shorthand of gender complementary possibilities engulfing issues of peace, conflict management and amicable resolution, negotiation, complementary give and take and collaboration. Thus, John and Katy's teamwork enable them to put their daughter through university successfully. John treats his wife as a true partner and he does not squarely objectify her, which helps them to decide and act on their collective decisions as equals.

Besides John and Katy being an ideal couple, they are selfless human beings. This is evidenced when they unconditionally volunteered themselves to rescue Katy's friend, Onai who is subjected to abusive behaviour patterns by her husband, Gari. "The two women were silent as John drove them to the hospital. The car's headlights were out of focus and most of the tower lights faulty, at best giving off flickers of inadequate lights." (Tagwira, 2006, p. 13). This quotation draw us to the

theme of humanness and care towards one another within the society at large. Hence, John and Katy serve as role model and an exemplary marriage union which other human beings should aspire to emulate. Apart from this, both John and Katy are on equal footing in maintaining their buoyance during the most trying times in the lives of Mbare residents.

John and Katy's relationship becomes a pillar for a successful community where man and women join hands in unison and work together to change the status-quo. John can be regarded as one of the men who are on the forefront of, and support gender change because he is awake to its importance to the betterment of the entire community in which they live. John is characterised by an equilibrium view of a fair and equal partnership which should exist between a man and a woman in marriage. Additionally, some of the most pivotal ingredients in sustaining John and Katy's marriage are respect, love, care and complementarity as they give each other equal rights and duties, characteristics of a marital relationship which may be infrequent in other couples' unions. It goes without saying that, Tagwira, through the character of John, challenges the perceived notion that women's and men's duties should be demarcated along gender lines. Overall, in circumstances of the conglomeration of poverty and unemployment, a flexibility in the gender division of labour might be critical to any given household's survival as alluded to by Connell (2011). This pragmatic outlook finds expression in the success this couple has amidst such intolerable conditions as portrayed by the author in *The Uncertainty of Hope* (2006).

4.3.4 Benevolent masculinity: Love, care and egalitarianism

It is noteworthy to realise that the portrayal of John can be associated with a benevolent kind of masculinity, a masculinity that has realised that to live a fulfilling life he has to have a sturdy base - that is, a household filled with true love. Thus, John becomes a key player in laying such a foundation in his household, and this is manifested by his resolute faithfulness even though he is in a position to cheat on Katy and get away with it. John is exposed to temptation of its highest nature and it is real, "Border posts were crawling with prostitutes of all shape, sizes and ages" (Tagwira, 2006, p. 242). Through the foregoing quote, the author possibly wants to reveal the degree of temptation that John is exposed and refuses to capitulate to. He is always alone with the girls he gives a safe passage into South Africa. This requires a highly principled individual to resist such temptation. John, being a loving man, values his relationship with his wife for it is constructed on the principles of honesty, true love and friendship. John's love for his wife expands beyond the

framework of their home as he is willing to give a helping hand to Onai because she is a friend to his wife. Even though he questions why Onai stays in an abusive relationship, he assists because he does not want to see his wife in distress. This is a manifestation of a caring husband, neighbour and friendship and proof that marriages are not always stereotypically dysfunctional. John's name plays its role form the bible perspective origin just like Michael in *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* (2001).

Moreover, John is a very generous and kind man as is demonstrated by his commitment and determination to educate his daughter, Faith. As a father, he devotes all his efforts and energy to provide his child with an education. An average man of character would have given up, especially under the economic hardship they were operating in. Instead of giving up, they espouses what Mlambo et al. (2015) refer to as "pragmatic morality." Hence, he indulged in illegal foreign currency deals and the smuggling of foodstuffs which were in drastic shortage in Zimbabwe. John treats the girls he smuggled into South Africa with respect and dignity by not taking advantage of them and charges them a fair fare. Therefore, one can posit that he epitomises the African concept 'Ubuntu' in that he respects fellow human beings and does not prey on the feeble members of society.

Although Onai is neither related to John nor to Katy, John always accommodates her as if she is part of his family. This is demonstrated by the fact that even after getting his hard-earned petrol after being in a queue for three days out of the five he has been on leave, he drives Onai to the hospital. Again, after Onai is evicted by Toro, John agrees that she and Ruva could stay with Katy while Onai tries sorting out her life. "Katy promptly came to her friend's rescue and took in the destitute family. They would be terribly crowded, but there was no immediate alternative" (Tagwira, 2006, p. 248). John's generosity seems to have been transmitted to his daughter, Faith, when she supports Onai and her family - she even selects Ruva to be as one of her bridesmaid. This implies that an ideal family structure gives birth to an equally good young generation, and through that, a society transforms into something better. For this to occur, it would only be possible through a different form of masculinity as exemplified by John. In a word, the author's intention in portraying caring and egalitarianism elements through the character of John, Katy and Faith can be viewed as clear message to society that John, Katy and Faith are role models which the society should aspire to emulate. The message also resonates with one of the goals of the research – the

establishment of the fact that functional marriages based on mutual trust and respect still exist out there and need to be emulated as the foundation and building blocks of any society in Africa.

4.3.5 Post-abusive marital relationships and resilience

Throughout the novel, the reader has learnt how Onai has been subjected to an abusive marital relationship by her husband, Gari. Onai's sufferings can be viewed as two-fold in the sense that she has been abused by her husband during the subsistence of their marriage and even after her husband has passed on by her husband's family, especially by Gari's brother, Toro and sister, Chipo. "Gari had slipped away peacefully during the night. They had not been able to contact her because there was no telephone number for his next of kin" (Tagwira, 2006, 238). As one might expect, Onai is considered by Gari's family as the prime suspect in her husband's death. This is evinced when Chipo states:

> One day you'll tell me what you did to the son of my mother. How can a man vomit blood? Taut muscles stood out on her scrawny neck as she shouted at Onai. The mourners around them shifted uncomfortably. Chipo's words insinuated that Onai had murdered Gari using witchcraft (Tagwira, 2006, p. 240)

Gari's sister, opts not to come to terms with reality, the reality that Gari died as a result of a disease. She instead resorts to pointing a finger to Onai as the prime suspect responsible for the death of her own husband. Tagwira (2006) thus advocates for society to change their viewpoint and accept the fact that one might die from different natural ways and not always from witchcraft. Onai's suspicions and accusations for being responsible for her husband's death, reminds the reader of Kauna in Andreas' *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* (2001) who, when her abusive husband suddenly dies is singled out as the prime suspect responsible for his death. The reader wonders why it has become a tradition that whenever a husband passes on, the prime suspect is always his wife who is accused of killing him through witchcraft. However, in most cases when a wife dies, it is rare for a husband to be singled out as a prime suspect.

Furthermore, Onai's ordeal was not buried with her husband, but continues beyond Gari's grave. In other words, whenever she thinks about Gari, she breaks into tears - something she did not do during the mourning period and, which could be explained by the fact that she had already shed all the of tears when Gari was still alive and that her heart has been hardened to an extent that she

is unable to shed even a single tear during the mourning period. To make matters worse, Gari's brother, Toro and his wife moved into Onai's house, telling her that they will live together so that he can protect her. Given the fact that Onai's aspirations have always been to secure employment and become an independent woman, she categorically rejected Toro's idea of becoming her steward. Consequently, she is evicted from her house. "You disrespectful, stupid woman! Get out of my house now, and take your snivelling children with you" (Tagwira, 2006, p. 246). Taking a cue from the above quote, one could deduce that Tagwira promotes and endorses verisimilitude such that readers are able to relate to the narrative through its characters, thereby allowing the reader to think about those women that are inhumanly treated in society at large. Besides all this, Onai did not give up on her determination to continue holding on to high moral values.

Apart from Onai's situation, the author presents the aspect of egalitarianism through the character of Mawaya who is a 'self-proclaimed beggar' who tries to cleanse himself from his wife's spirit which could emanate from guilty on consciousness when one believes that they have wronged a dead person in some way. Mawaya's efforts to humiliate himself by doing the right thing is enough to expose the kind of man he is. He humiliates himself through the Shona cultural practice called '*kutanda botso*' in order to atone for the wrongs he did to his now late wife. Mawaya does this coincidentally at the same time when Mbare has been obliterated by the government. He denies himself of luxury and people ridicule him and make him a source of humour and laughter. Onai, has been viewed as a social egalitarian for she struggles to barely get food for her children, yet she is able to share the little she has with Mawaya. Therefore, there is no humane spirit that surpass that. Owing to Onai's egalitarianism, Mawaya becomes her benefactor at the end when he offers her a job at his late wife's sewing shop. This gives Onai an exit out of hardship into the world she never dreamt existed. Mawaya is not related to Onai, however, he is mindful that if it was not Onai's social egalitarianism, he could have starved to death. Through the character of Mayawa, the reader is presented with an image of a generous man, a good husband and above all, a good humanitarian. Hence, Tagwira in her narrative portrays various forms of masculinity to illustrate both abusive and caring men. As much as there is a hideous image of masculinities represented through the character of Gari, Tagwira portrays an agglomeration of both magnificent and diabolical men. Moreover, the author presents men who are ready and willing to challenge the image of the patriarchal values that have been imposed on the society from one generation to

another. Hence, those are men who believe in what Steady (1987, as cited in Nnaemeka, 2004) argues for saying:

> For women, the male is not 'the other' part but of the human same. Each gender constitutes the critical half that makes the human whole. Neither sex is totally complete in itself. Each has and needs a complement, despite the possession of unique features of its own (p. 380)

Taken together, the reader notes that despite the existence of abusive and womanising husbands, there are also those men who are ready and willing to cooperate and work side by side with the female gender for the total amelioration of hegemonic masculinity and patriarchy dominated society and society as a whole.

4. 4 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented an analysis of *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* (2001) and *The Uncertainty of Hope* (2006) and observed as a general theme that with uncertainty, comes hope. The authors register the challenges women face in society, and show how these women overcome them. The uncertainty about the future of Zimbabwean citizens is visible as most of the characters seem to drift between uncertainty and hope. Those who have been affected by Operation Murambatsvina attach their hope on the promise of a house in the distant future, under Operation Garikai (good living). Women such as Katy Nguni and Onai Moyo feel vulnerable to HIV and AIDS. HIV and AIDS is a reality in their society, where many families have lost their loved ones. Corruption becomes the order of the day, where even police officers engage in illegal foreign currency dealings. The institutionalisation of corruption and immoral activities become apparent. The under privileged and disadvantaged have been on the receiving end. While Tagwira's characters carry on with their struggle to find hope in the environment of uncertainty, drastic changes still need to take place in all spheres of life such as employment creation, education, affirmative action where necessary, and making resources available to the nation. Such drastic changes can only be made by leaders who are policy-makers.

Both novels further analysed the representation of marital stability and quality as presented by the authors. The chapter thus critically analysed the causes of matrimonial dissatisfaction and marital breakdown in the two selected texts. Andreas and Tagwira portray both functional and dysfunctional marriages. However, even though each novel is likely to have less dissatisfaction

and dysfunctional marriages, namel: Shange and Kauna's in *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* (2001), Gari and Onai's in *The Uncertainty of Hope* (2006) and stronger, stable, satisfying and functional marriages, both authors opt to focus and digest more on dysfunctional marriages than on functional ones. Thus, inundating all ideals, stable, satisfaction and functional matrimonial relationships in the texts. Thus, providing the gap for this study.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5. 1 Introduction

The previous Chapter, (Chapter 4), presented analyses and discussions of the two chosen texts *The Purple of Violet* (2001) and *The Uncertainty of Hope* (2006). Chapter 5 focuses on the conclusion and recommendations. The aim of this study was to analyse the representation of marriage in *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* (2001) by Neshani Andreas and *The Uncertainty of Hope* (2006) by Valerie Tagwira. The research was necessitated by the observation that scholars, critics and authors who explored marriage as a theme in African authored texts and within the African setting tended to look at marriage from a one-dimensional perspective. The study was guided by two theories, namely Masculinity and Nego-Feminism in the analysis of the two narratives, focusing on the manner in which they present various versions of marriage. It was through the amalgamation of Masculinity and Nego-Feminism theories that the discussions provided a nuanced mode of reasoning in the examination of the selected novels, *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* (2001) and *The Uncertainty of Hope* (2006).

5.2 Conclusion and recommendations

In line with the objectives of the study, some concluding remarks can be drawn from the study's findings. Critically reading *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* (2001) and *The Uncertainty of Hope* (2006) is enriching and can provide a better understanding of the concept of the institution of marriage and its implications thereof, especially within an African cultural context. Both texts, *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* (2001) and The *Uncertainty of Hope* (2006) are texts that contain significant information and persistent narratives pertinent to Africans' views on the concept of marriage. In both novels, women are often likely to fall victims at the hands of their partners in most matrimonial relationships.

In examining both *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* (2001) as well as *The Uncertainty of Hope* (2006), one might argue that despite Shange and Kauna's dissatisfaction and dysfunctional marriage in *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* (2001), and in Gari and Onai's marriage in *The Uncertainty of Hope* (2006), the rest of matrimonial alliances seem to be stable, satisfying and functional. In the two texts, Hegemonic Masculinity, infidelity, extramarital affairs and abusive

husbands have been the motif throughout the texts. Reading both texts provides the reader with insights regarding the re/presentation of the institution of marriage. In both texts, both authors try to strike balanced representation of marriage. However, they focus more on the dysfunctional marital relationships, even though the texts contain more functional marriages than dysfunctional ones. As a result, dysfunctional marriages overwhelm functional ones.

Of course, in reading *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* (2001) and *The Uncertainty of Hope* (2006), one may realise that African tradition is not likely to support divorce, but rather discourages it at all costs. Through reading the novels, it was revealed that divorce from the African perspective is viewed as an embarrassment to the family and a sin too. Thus, in both texts, the two women, Kauna and Onai stayed in their abusive relationships until their husbands died. From reading *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* (2001) and *The Uncertainty of Hope* (2006), it becomes apparent that in most cases, the in-laws are not supportive of the widow in the event of her husband's death. Instead, they are more interested in inheriting his property and mistreating the widow and children. Another critical issue is the concept of death. In most African society, there is a notion that there is no innocent death, meaning that in every death there is some kind of evilness - witchcraft. Thus in *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* (2001) and *The Uncertainty of Hope* (2006) too, the widows, in this case, Kauna and Onai were falsely accused of having bewitched their husbands.

On one hand, *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* (2001) and *The Uncertainty of Hope* (2006) further display how extramarital affairs and unfaithfulness can increase HIV and AIDS transmission and on the other, breed conflicts within marriage and eventually the collapse of marriages. Also, the texts exemplify two kinds of men namely: caring and loving husbands who are prepared to work side by side with their partners and abusive drunkards and womaniser who are irresponsible and do not care about their families. *The Uncertainty of Hope* (2006) demonstrates how people can adapt strategies to cope with the situation in times of crisis rather than becoming vulnerable. Besides that, *The Uncertainty of Hope* (2006) shows that, in times of economic hardship, both government and private officials use their status for their personal gains.

This chapter concludes the study on the critical examination of the literary representation of marriage in Neshani Andreas' *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* (2001) and Valerie Tagwira's *The Uncertainty of Hope* (2006). Collectively, in both novels, most marriages seem to be stable and functional with the exception of Shange and Kauna's, as well as Gari, and Onai's ones. Even so,

both authors focused more on the dysfunctional marriages, in this case, Shange and Kauna's in *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* (2001) and Gari and Onai's in *The Uncertainty of Hope* (2006), thus undermining the stable, long-lasting, satisfying and functional marriages.

5.3 Recommendations for future research

The focal point of this study has been to seek to provide a holistic and balanced re/presentation of marriage. Such representation could only be attainable through the process of critical reading and analyses of the selected texts, *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* (2001) and *The Uncertainty of Hope* (2006) both contain tacit imaging of marriage and the characteristics that can sustain it as well as those that can destroy marriages. Based on the objectives of this study and analyses of the selected texts, this study concludes that stable, satisfying and functional marriage are possible within the societies. Overall, this study may serve as a fruitful avenue for future researches. The study makes a number of recommendations for future/further studies based on the implications of the analyses undertaken here.

- That there is need to conduct a study to explore the reason why most African texts on marriage are female authored and seek the male voices as well in this discourse.
- From the current study, it is observable that in most cases women fall victim of abuse in the relationship, therefore it is recommended that a future research be carried out on whether there are men who are subjected to marital and other forms of abuse in the African literature.
- That future research should be conducted to find out reasons why women stay in abusive relationships in the African literature.
- That future research be conducted to understand emotional processes and other couple relational factors within marriage that could be linked to health and well-being in African literature.
- That a future research is needed to investigate the extent to which arranged marriages contribute to marital breakdown within the African literature.

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